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State Overview

IDAHO'S UNEMPLOYMENT RATE INCREASES TO 3.7 PERCENT

Idaho's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for November 2005 was 3.7 percent, up one-tenth of a percentage point from October. This was the fourth straight month with an unemployment rate below 4 percent, which signifies the economy's continued strength and stability.

November's unemployment rate was eight-tenths of a percentage point below the 4.5 percent rate experienced one year ago. The November unemployment rate remained below the national rate of 5 percent, which was up one-tenth of a percentage point from October.

The total number of people working in Idaho reached a record high for a sixth straight month at 710,900, while the number of unemployed people increased slightly to 27,000. The number of workers without jobs has now been at or below 27,000 for the previous three months.

Only 500 workers entered the labor force in November, but that was still enough to push the total labor force to a record 737,900.

During the past 28 years, Idaho's October-to-November unemployment rate has decreased eight times for an average decrease of one-tenth of a percentage point. It remained unchanged 13 times and increased seven times for an average increase of one-tenth of a percentage point. This somewhat inconsistent pattern reflects several strong seasonal influences such as the slack period between summer and winter recreation seasons, the end of the crop growing/harvesting period, retail buildup for the holiday season and the onset of cold or wet winter weather. When these factors occur and in which combinations can have a strong overall effect on the state's unemployment rate.

AREA AND COUNTY LABOR FORCE HIGHLIGHTS

State Table 1 on page 3 provides the month's labor force statistics for Idaho counties, designated labor market areas and selected cities.

Only five rural counties reported unemployment rates of 7 percent or more in November. Clearwater County reported the highest rate at 9.5 percent. The other four counties were Boundary at 8.5 percent, Adams at 8.3 percent, Shoshone at 7.5 percent and Benewah at 7.3 percent. One year earlier, seven rural counties posted jobless rates of 7 percent or more and only one—Clearwater—was in double digits at 11.1 percent.

The lowest county unemployment rate in November was 2.3 percent in Owyhee County. Eleven additional counties reported rates of 3 percent or less: Blaine at 2.4 percent, Teton at 2.6 percent, Madison at 2.7

percent, Bonneville at 2.8 percent, Oneida, Gooding, Franklin and Jerome at 2.9 percent and Ada, Jefferson and Lewis at 3.0 percent. One year ago only four counties reported at or below 3 percent: Blaine, Lewis, Madison and Owyhee counties.

The Grangeville Small Labor Market Area had the highest November unemployment rate at 5.8 percent among the state's 10 labor market areas. This north central area's unemployment has been ranked as the highest unemployment area this year as the rate has ranged from 5.3 percent in April to 6.7 percent in July.

Nonfarm Payroll Jobs

State Table 2 on page 4 provides state industry employment data for the current month, previous month and one year previous.

Idaho lost 2,100 nonfarm jobs between October and November 2005. Some of the job losses can be attributed to industries which often have job cutbacks at this time of the year, but some of the losses occurred in industries that have been experiencing non-seasonal losses at points throughout the year. Winter weather made a rather cold and wet debut in mid-November which hastened job declines in some industries that usually experience a more drawn-out seasonal decline. Finally a cautionary air was reported among consumers and merchants about holiday shopping expectations and seasonal celebrations, and some job increases possibly were deferred if not abandoned.

The majority of the October-to-November job losses occurred in the goods-producing industries. The number of jobs declined by 1,800 due mostly to seasonal factors. However, these industries remain strong as the year-over-year gain of 6,600 jobs indicates. Construction jobs numbered 46,900 in November, down 1,200 from October but 5,800 more than November 2004. Of those jobs, 11,300 were involved in the construction of buildings that includes new work, additions, alterations, maintenance and repairs. Any subcontracted work is included in the specialty trade contractors sector, which is the largest construction sector numbering 29,500 jobs. Although that is 600 fewer jobs from October, it is 3,500 more than one year earlier and is the fastest-growing construction sector. Within the specialty trade contractors sector, building equipment contractors is the largest subsector with 10,500 jobs in November, representing 36 percent of the specialty trade contractors jobs and 22 percent of all construction jobs. Workers in this construction subsector are involved in installing or servicing equipment that forms part of a building's mechanical system, such as electrical, water, heating and cooling. These workers may also install elevators, service station equipment and central vacuum cleaning systems. Foundation, structure and building exterior contractors were the second largest group with 8,000 workers. This group includes specialty trades needed to complete the basic structure — foundation, frame and shell — of buildings. The number of building permits continues to exceed prior years. As a result, construction activity in the short-term future will continue to remain strong.

Food manufacturing reported significant job losses, both month-over-month and year-over-year. The job loss numbered 400 from October and 700 from November 2004. As noted in previous issues of this newsletter, jobs in this industry, which Idahoans usually call food processing, have been on a downward trend in recent years. Some of this is due to productivity increases, but most is due to changing market conditions for Idaho food products along with natural causes such as droughts. As a

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result, some processing plants have closed and others have reduced shifts or scaled back production. Dairying and cheese manufacturing have increased, but those job gains have not offset the losses in crop foodstuff processing.

The year-over-year job loss in manufacturing nondurable goods was offset by gains in the durable goods sector. Wood products and fabricated metal products each added 300 jobs in the previous 12 months. Other sectors combined their small increases for a total of 600 new jobs.

The service-providing industries lost 300 jobs from October to November, resulting in a total of 506,000 jobs in November. The job losses were largely concentrated in leisure and hospitality, which lost 1,400 jobs, but this was offset by an addition of 1,600 jobs in retail trade.

Job losses of 500 or more each occurred in the administrative and support services component of professional and business services. These losses were primarily due to cutbacks in call center jobs, reductions in leisure and hospitality jobs with the transition from summer/fall to winter recreation activities and federal government job losses because of seasonal employee terminations.

Normally retail trade adds 1,500 to 1,800 jobs as the holiday shopping season begins. The average for the last 15 years has been 1,600 additional jobs from October to November, which was the increase this year. Many reports indicated merchants were cautiously optimistic about sales this year but were being conservative in hiring additional sales staff until the holiday shopping picture became clearer after Thanksgiving. The largest increase was in general merchandise stores which includes Shopko, Fred Meyer and Wal-Mart along with department stores like Macy's, Mervyns and Dillards.

The November year-over-year changes reflect the positive job growth across the industries. Jobs were added in almost all industries except food and beverage stores, scientific research and development, arts, entertainment and recreation, and local government administration, which experienced job losses ranging from 100 to 700. Retail sales employment is expected to accelerate in December, and the number of service-providing jobs at the end the year will show strong growth.

How the state's labor market fared during 2005 and the outlook for the next 18 months is the focus of the FYI section, starting on page 21. Some preliminary estimates of 2005 have already been made as the Idaho Legislature invites Idaho Commerce & Labor to provide its assessment of recent economic activity and projections of what might occur during the upcoming fiscal year.

State Table 1: November 2005 Labor Force (preliminary)				
Seasonally Adjusted	Labor Force	Unemp.	% Unemp.	Total Emp.
Lewiston MSA	28,997	1,364	4.7	27,634
Nez Perce County	18,752	765	4.1	17,987
Asotin County, WA	10,245	598	5.8	9,647
Boise City-Nampa MSA	282,115	9,287	3.3	272,828
Ada County	187,946	5,607	3.0	182,339
Boise County	4,174	167	4.0	4,007
Canyon County	77,174	3,051	4.0	74,123
Gem County	7,427	340	4.6	7,087
Owyhee County	5,393	121	2.3	5,272
Pocatello MSA	45,158	1,549	3.4	43,609
Bannock County	41,057	1,378	3.4	39,679
Power County	4,101	170	4.2	3,930
Idaho Falls MSA	59,719	1,702	2.9	58,017
Bonneville County	49,039	1,377	2.8	47,662
Jefferson County	10,680	325	3.0	10,354
Coeur d'Alene MSA*	68,716	2,542	3.7	66,175
Burley MicSA	18,566	1,041	5.6	17,525
Cassia County	9,546	478	5.0	9,069
Minidoka County	9,019	563	6.2	8,456
Rexburg MicSA	21,268	646	3.0	20,622
Fremont County	6,625	257	3.9	6,368
Madison County	14,644	389	2.7	14,254
Twin Falls MicSA	50,545	1,597	3.2	48,948
Jerome County	10,623	310	2.9	10,313
Twin Falls County	39,921	1,287	3.2	38,634
Grangeville SLMA	8,695	500	5.8	8,195
Idaho County	6,971	449	6.4	6,522
Lewis County	1,724	51	3.0	1,673
Hailey SLMA	15,163	367	2.4	14,796
Blaine County	14,485	343	2.4	14,142
Camas County	678	24	3.6	654
Adams County	1,832	152	8.3	1,680
Bear Lake County	3,203	100	3.1	3,102
Benewah County	4,093	300	7.3	3,793
Blackfoot MicSA (Bingham County)	21,319	779	3.7	20,540
Bonner County	20,385	966	4.7	19,419
Boundary County	4,539	386	8.5	4,153
Butte County	1,221	52	4.2	1,169
Caribou County	3,243	138	4.3	3,105
Clark County	599	19	3.2	580
Clearwater County	3,285	313	9.5	2,973
Custer County	2,721	123	4.5	2,599
Mountain Home MicSA (Elmore County)	10,655	493	4.6	10,162
Franklin County	6,421	185	2.9	6,236
Gooding County	8,204	240	2.9	7,964
Moscow MicSA (Latah County)	19,762	675	3.4	19,087
Lemhi County	4,015	236	5.9	3,778
Lincoln County	2,582	95	3.7	2,487
Oneida County	2,018	59	2.9	1,959
Payette County	10,258	705	6.9	9,554
Shoshone County	5,502	411	7.5	5,092
Teton County	4,098	108	2.6	3,990
Valley County	4,412	202	4.6	4,210
Washington County	5,004	227	4.5	4,776
State of Idaho	737,917	26,959	3.7	710,958
Idaho Cities				
Boise	118,928	4,018	3.4	114,910
Caldwell	22,002	845	3.8	21,157
Coeur d'Alene	30,082	950	3.2	29,132
Idaho Falls	15,554	635	4.1	14,919
Lewiston	30,052	1,316	4.4	28,736
Meridian	28,266	840	3.0	27,426
Nampa	21,037	705	3.4	20,332
Pocatello	20,920	468	2.2	20,451
Twin Falls	14,545	637	4.4	13,908

* Coeur d'Alene MSA includes all of Kootenai County.

Agriculture

The hired worker agricultural work force was estimated at 28,730 people, down 27.1 percent from October. This is a normal seasonal decline but reflects the agricultural activity that continues through the winter months. Livestock feeding, husbandry, milking and transportation occur on ranches, feedlots and farms year-round. Farm and irrigation equipment is serviced and fences are mended in preparation for the next growing season.

The most positive development for Idaho agriculture during November was that snow and rain came early and in larger quantities than in the last several years of drought conditions. This is a great beginning to recharge the state's water system.

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State Table 2: Economic Indicators

				% Change From	
	Nov 2005	Oct 2005	Nov 2004	Last Month	Last Year
IDAHO LABOR FORCE ⁽¹⁾					
Seasonally Adjusted					
Civilian Labor Force	737,900	737,400	706,600	0.1	4.4
Unemployment	27,000	26,700	31,500	1.1	-14.3
Percent of Labor Force Unemployed	3.7	3.6	4.5		
Total Employment	710,900	710,700	675,100	0.0	5.3
Unadjusted					
Civilian Labor Force	736,100	739,700	705,600	-0.5	4.3
Unemployment	25,000	21,900	29,200	14.2	-14.4
Percent of Labor Force Unemployed	3.4	3.0	4.1		
Total Employment	711,100	717,800	676,400	-0.9	5.1
U. S. UNEMPLOYMENT RATE ⁽²⁾	5.0	4.9	5.4		
U.S. CONSUMER PRICE INDEX ⁽²⁾					
Urban Wage Earners & Clerical Workers (CPI-W)	193.4	195.2	186.8	-0.9	3.5
All Urban Consumer (CPI-U)	197.6	199.2	191.0	-0.8	3.5
AGRICULTURE					
Agriculture Employment	38,830	49,500	38,820	-21.6	0.0
Operators	9,740	9,740	9,740	0.0	0.0
Unpaid Family	360	360	360	0.0	0.0
Hired Workers	28,730	39,400	28,720	-27.1	0.0
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE					
Claims Activities					
Initial Claims ⁽³⁾	11,225	6,477	13,823	73.3	-18.8
Weeks Claimed ⁽⁴⁾	45,314	35,794	63,169	26.6	-28.3
Benefit Payment Activities⁽⁵⁾					
Weeks Compensated	39,022	22,663	49,696	72.2	-21.5
Total Benefit \$ Paid	\$8,811,621	\$5,119,474	\$10,860,776	72.1	-18.9
Average Weekly Benefit Amount	\$225.81	\$225.90	\$218.54	0.0	3.3
Covered Employers	46,170	46,131	43,716	0.1	5.6
Total Benefit \$ Paid During Last 12 Months ⁽⁴⁾	\$130,474,981	\$133,861,054	\$162,775,150	-2.5	-19.8
(1) Preliminary Estimate					
(2) Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics					
(3) Includes all entitlements/programs on Intrastate and Interstate Agent, New, and Additional Claims					
(4) Includes all entitlements/programs, Intrastate and Interstate Agent					
(5) Includes all entitlements/programs, Total Liable Activities					

State Table 3: Nonfarm Payroll Jobs

BY PLACE OF WORK	% Change From				
	Nov 2005*	Oct 2005	Nov 2004	Last Month	Last Year
Nonfarm Payroll Jobs**	619,700	621,800	598,800	-0.3	3.5
GOODS-PRODUCING INDUSTRIES	113,700	115,500	107,100	-1.6	6.2
Natural Resources & Mining	4,500	4,700	4,000	-4.3	12.5
Logging	2,400	2,500	2,200	-4.0	9.1
Mining	2,100	2,200	1,800	-4.5	16.7
Metal Ore Mining	600	600	600	0.0	0.0
Construction	46,900	48,100	41,100	-2.5	14.1
Manufacturing	62,300	62,700	62,000	-0.6	0.5
Durable Goods	39,900	39,900	38,700	0.0	3.1
Wood Product Manufacturing	7,600	7,600	7,200	0.0	5.6
Sawmills & Wood Preservation	2,600	2,600	2,700	0.0	-3.7
Veneer & Engineered Products	1,600	1,600	1,300	0.0	23.1
Other Wood Product Manufacturing	3,400	3,400	3,200	0.0	6.3
Fabricated Metal Product Manufacturing	3,900	3,900	3,600	0.0	8.3
Machinery Manufacturing	2,600	2,500	2,600	4.0	0.0
Computer & Electronic Product Manufacturing	16,100	16,100	16,300	0.0	-1.2
Transportation Equipment Manufacturing	2,600	2,700	2,500	-3.7	4.0
Other Durable Goods	7,100	7,100	6,500	0.0	9.2
Nondurable Goods	22,400	22,800	23,300	-1.8	-3.9
Food Manufacturing	14,400	14,800	15,100	-2.7	-4.6
Fruits & Vegetable Preserving & Specialty	6,700	7,000	7,100	-4.3	-5.6
Paper Manufacturing	1,600	1,600	1,600	0.0	0.0
Printing & Related Support Activities	1,900	1,900	1,900	0.0	0.0
Chemical Manufacturing	1,900	1,900	1,900	0.0	0.0
Other Nondurable Goods	2,700	2,600	2,800	3.8	-3.6
SERVICE-PROVIDING INDUSTRIES	506,000	506,300	491,700	-0.1	2.9
Trade, Transportation, & Utilities	125,400	123,800	122,700	1.3	2.2
Trade	105,800	104,000	103,400	1.7	2.3
Wholesale Trade	27,000	26,800	25,800	0.7	4.7
Wholesalers, Durable Goods	12,500	12,400	11,900	0.8	5.0
Wholesalers, Nondurable Goods	11,900	11,700	11,400	1.7	4.4
Retail Trade	78,800	77,200	77,600	2.1	1.5
Motor Vehicle and Parts Dealers	11,600	11,700	11,300	-0.9	2.7
Building Material and Garden Equipment	9,100	9,100	8,300	0.0	9.6
Food & Beverage Stores	12,100	12,200	12,200	-0.8	-0.8
General Merchandise Stores	17,600	16,400	17,100	7.3	2.9
Transportation, Warehousing, & Utilities	19,600	19,800	19,300	-1.0	1.6
Utilities	1,900	1,900	1,900	0.0	0.0
Transportation & Warehousing	17,700	17,900	17,400	-1.1	1.7
Rail Transportation	1,100	1,100	1,100	0.0	0.0
Truck Transportation	8,900	8,900	8,700	0.0	2.3
Information	11,000	11,000	10,500	0.0	4.8
Telecommunications	4,500	4,400	4,200	2.3	7.1
Financial Activities	29,800	29,700	28,800	0.3	3.5
Finance & Insurance	21,600	21,500	21,000	0.5	2.9
Real Estate & Rental & Leasing	8,200	8,200	7,800	0.0	5.1
Professional & Business Services	78,800	79,300	74,400	-0.6	5.9
Professional, Scientific, & Technical	30,500	30,400	30,000	0.3	1.7
Scientific Research & Development	7,500	7,600	7,600	-1.3	-1.3
Management of Companies & Enterprises	7,600	7,600	7,400	0.0	2.7
Administrative & Support & Waste Management	40,700	41,300	37,000	-1.5	10.0
Administrative & Support Services	39,300	39,800	35,800	-1.3	9.8
Educational & Health Services	70,200	69,900	67,200	0.4	4.5
Educational Services	9,000	8,800	8,100	2.3	11.1
Health Care & Social Assistance	61,200	61,100	59,100	0.2	3.6
Hospitals	13,300	13,300	13,200	0.0	0.8
Leisure & Hospitality	55,200	56,600	54,100	-2.5	2.0
Arts, Entertainment, & Recreation	6,200	7,000	6,500	-11.4	-4.6
Accommodation & Food Services	49,000	49,600	47,600	-1.2	2.9
Accommodation	7,700	8,000	7,600	-3.8	1.3
Food Services & Drinking Places	41,300	41,600	40,000	-0.7	3.3
Other Services	18,600	18,700	18,100	-0.5	2.8
Total Government	117,000	117,300	115,900	-0.3	0.9
Federal Government	12,700	13,200	12,400	-3.8	2.4
State & Local Government	104,300	104,100	103,500	0.2	0.8
State Government	30,200	30,500	29,900	-1.0	1.0
State Government Education	15,000	15,100	15,000	-0.7	0.0
State Government Administration	15,200	15,400	14,900	-1.3	2.0
Local Government	74,100	73,600	73,600	0.7	0.7
Local Government Education	39,600	38,900	38,500	1.8	2.9
Local Government Administration	31,500	31,600	32,200	-0.3	-2.2
Local Government Tribes	3,000	3,100	2,900	-3.2	3.4

*Preliminary Estimate

** Estimates include all full or part time wage and salary workers who worked or received pay in the following industry groups during the pay period ending nearest the 12th of the month.



Panhandle News

BENEWAH, BONNER, BOUNDARY, KOOTENAI & SHOSHONE COUNTIES

2005: THE YEAR THAT EARNED RAVE REVIEWS

Benewah County

Benewah County, with a population of 9,000, has enjoyed three years in a row of significant job growth. Its unemployment rate, which typically was in the double digits over the last 25 years, fell to 8.8 percent by 2004, and then dropped to 7.9 percent in 2005.

An increase in U.S. housing starts, economic development projects for the Coeur d'Alene Tribe and an influx of retirees to the county have brought new employment opportunities.

The high level of U.S. housing starts during the last three years pushed up lumber prices and increased the demand for lumber and plywood, which helped add 100 jobs in the timber industry. With the county's two largest mills, the Potlatch complex and Regulus, currently making multi-million investments in operations, the prospects for the long run also look bright.

The Coeur d'Alene Tribe continues to expand employment at its headquarters, health clinic, school and enterprises in Plummer County, adding about 50 jobs in 2005 after adding 130 jobs in the previous two years. In addition, Benewah County benefits from the expansion of the tribe's casino in Worley, just over the county line.

In addition to creating new jobs, the tribe has contributed toward schools and economic development efforts, shared its health clinic and wellness center with community members who are not tribal members, assisted with the Trail of the Coeur d'Alene rails-to-trails project, provided broadband Internet access to everyone in its area and offered free bus service through western Benewah County into the most populated areas of Kootenai County.

Retirees have been drawn to St. Maries, Fernwood and Santa, which re-

Panhandle Table 1: Coeur d'Alene MSA Labor Force & Employment Kootenai County

	Nov 2005*	Oct 2005	Nov 2004	% Change From	
				Last Month	Last Year
INDIVIDUALS BY PLACE OF RESIDENCE					
Seasonally Adjusted					
Civilian Labor Force	68,720	69,170	64,190	-0.7	7.1
Unemployed	2,540	2,600	3,160	-2.3	-19.6
% of Labor Force Unemployed	3.7	3.8	4.9		
Total Employment	66,180	66,570	61,030	-0.6	8.4
Unadjusted					
Civilian Labor Force	68,800	68,950	64,320	-0.2	7.0
Unemployed	2,390	2,110	2,970	13.3	-19.5
% of Labor Force Unemployed	3.5	3.1	4.6		
Total Employment	66,410	66,840	61,350	-0.6	8.2
JOBS BY PLACE OF WORK					
Nonfarm Payroll Jobs** - NAICS	54,240	54,950	50,670	-1.3	7.0
Goods-Producing Industries	10,200	10,420	9,420	-2.1	8.3
Natural Resources & Mining	420	440	400	-4.5	5.0
Construction	5,370	5,600	4,870	-4.1	10.3
Manufacturing	4,410	4,380	4,150	0.7	6.3
Wood Product Manufacturing	980	980	990	0.0	-1.0
Other Manufacturing	3,430	3,400	3,160	0.9	8.5
Service-Providing Industries	44,040	44,530	41,250	-1.1	6.8
Trade, Transportation, & Utilities	10,360	10,230	9,670	1.3	7.1
Wholesale Trade	1,380	1,380	1,270	0.0	8.7
Retail Trade	8,020	7,890	7,410	1.6	8.2
Transportation, Warehousing & Utilities	960	960	990	0.0	-3.0
Information	1,030	1,030	1,040	0.0	-1.0
Financial Activities	2,740	2,730	2,480	0.4	10.5
Professional & Business Services	6,430	6,330	5,880	1.6	9.4
Educational & Health Services	5,680	5,650	5,360	0.5	6.0
Leisure & Hospitality	6,530	7,230	6,070	-9.7	7.6
Other Services	1,620	1,630	1,440	-0.6	12.5
Government Education	3,760	3,740	3,590	0.5	4.7
Government Administration	5,190	5,240	5,040	-1.0	3.0
Government Tribes	700	720	680	-2.8	2.9

* Preliminary estimate

**Full- or part-time jobs of people who worked for or received wages in the pay period including the 12th of the month

cently temporarily renamed itself SecretSanta.com for the leisurely lifestyle and relatively low cost of housing in each community.

In the last few years, a growing number of retirees have been moving into Benewah County to enjoy its pleasant communities, relatively low housing costs, fabulous hunting and fishing opportunities, the Trail of the Coeur d'Alenes and the casino in Worley. Benewah County saw an 11.4 percent gain in taxable sales from \$42.3 million in 2004 to \$47.2 million in 2005. That's an indication of just how well the county's retail and service sectors have been doing. It also reflects the surging incomes of local residents.

Construction is playing a major role in Benewah County's economic growth. Between 2002 and 2005, construction employment grew nearly

50 percent, and it accounted for 28 percent of the 160 total nonfarm payroll jobs added.

Bonner County

Bonner County, with a population of 40,600, is home to many creative people, as demonstrated by the many artists' studios and the variety of business headquarters there. Among the businesses that call the county home are Litehouse, the nation's largest maker of salad dressings; Coldwater Creek, a highly respected retailer of women's clothing; Panhandle State Bank, an independent bank with 15 branches in Idaho and Oregon; Die-drich Manufacturing, a maker of coffee-roasting equipment; Cygnus, a machine shop serving the aeronautical industry; Encoder Products, designer and manufacturer of robotic devices; Thorne Research, maker of nutritional supplements; and Unicep Packaging, maker of one-dose plastic applicators. The above companies have added nearly 400 jobs to the region over the last two years. The companies also are investing a great deal of money in the community. The most recent investment comes from Panhandle State Bank, which plans to build a \$40 million, four-story headquarter in downtown Sandpoint.

Coldwater Creek, the national retailer that employs more than 400 people at its headquarters in Sandpoint, increased its employment in the Sandpoint area by more than 80 jobs in 2005 as it continued to open dozens of retail stores across the United States. Later this year, Coldwater Creek will open a new 10,000-square-foot retail store with a wine bar in downtown Sandpoint and will close its store on Cedar Street Bridge. Upcoming Coldwater ventures include the opening of day spas in or next to six Coldwater stores across the U.S. The spas will provide a full range of treatments including massages, facials, manicures and pedicures. The spas will feature Coldwater clothing and personal care products, and they are expected to increase traffic into the stores.

Recreational opportunities continue to be a major driver of the county's rapid population growth. Rivers and lakes including beautiful Priest Lake and Idaho's largest lake, Lake Pend Oreille, offer wonderful swimming, boating, rafting, fishing and beach-lounging opportunities. Sandpoint's charming downtown is the backdrop for art galleries, the Panida Theater and some of the inland Northwest's best restaurants.

In winter, many visitors love skiing and snowboarding at Schweitzer Mountain Resort near Sandpoint, which has more skiable terrain than any other resort in Idaho, or snowmobiling in the Priest River area. In the 2004-2005 ski season, a lack of snow proved disastrous for Bonner County. While Schweitzer normally hosts 225,000 ski visits a year, it recorded only 85,000 ski visits, and it was forced to lay off many of its 600 em-

ployees early. Snow conditions are much better this ski season, although they are not ideal.

The snow dearth early in 2005 depressed Bonner County's hotel-motel receipts 6.7 percent, from \$13.3 million in 2004 to \$12.4 million in 2005, despite increased summer tourism. Fortunately, hotel-motel receipts had increased 17.1 percent between 2003 and 2004, better reflecting the county's growing tourism potential.

The effect of high lumber prices on sawmill employment, along with the growth of some of the manufacturers mentioned previously, allowed Bonner County to add nearly 140 manufacturing jobs in 2005. The county is a true standout when it comes to manufacturing job growth. While the United States lost 17 percent of its manufacturing jobs between 2000 and 2005, Bonner County's manufacturing jobs grew an amazing 54 percent and more manufacturing jobs may be headed that way.

This summer, Bonner County Economic Development Corporation and Priest River Development Corporation recruited Van Tech/SafetyLine from California to the Priest River organization's industrial park in Priest River. SafetyLine's products include flame-retardant overalls and jackets, safety gloves and high-visibility parkas and vests worn by construction and road crews. The company is expected to employ 40 people when it begins operations in a few months.

With population and incomes rising, Bonner County's retail sector posted an 11.8 percent increase in taxable sales from \$304.2 million in 2004 to \$340.1 million in 2005. The sector also added about 250 jobs including 120 jobs with the opening of a new Home Depot in early 2005.

Construction is playing a major role in Bonner County's economic growth. Between 2002 and 2005, construction employment grew more than 50 percent, and it accounted for 27 percent of the additional 1,630 total nonfarm payroll jobs.

Boundary County

Boundary County, with a population of 10,400, is an amazingly resilient community. In 2003, one of its two largest lumber mills closed, putting more than 140 people out of work. Despite that loss, the county added 110 jobs between 2003 and 2004. In March 2005, the county's largest employer, CEDU, closed when its owner Brown Schools entered bankruptcy in March. CEDU employed more than 300 people at Rocky Mountain, Northwest and Boulder Creek academies for troubled teens and the Ascent therapeutic adventure program in Boundary County. Despite the loss, the county's economy continued to generate new retail and service jobs, and the county did not lose population.

Job gains in the construction, health care, tourism, retail and service sectors offset some of the CEDU job

losses; the net result was the loss of the 110 nonfarm payroll jobs the county had added in 2004. Because many residents started their own businesses or found jobs in neighboring counties, the number of employed residents grew from 4,030 in 2004 to 4,270 in 2005.

Most of the CEDU jobs will return over the next two years. In late fall, Universal Health Services, a health care management company based in Pennsylvania, purchased the CEDU schools. It is in the process of reopening the programs and gradually expanding employment.

Tourism has been a bright spot. Between 2004 and 2005, hotel-motel receipts in Boundary County increased 4.2 percent to \$2.8 million. In 2005, the International Selkirk Loop — a scenic byway through Bonner and Boundary counties, British Columbia and eastern Washington — received the special “All American” designation, which will bring more tourists through Bonners Ferry, Sandpoint and Priest River.

The Kootenai Tribe completed a major expansion of its Kootenai River Inn & Casino in the summer. A few months later the construction of a 325-foot pedestrian bypass under U.S. Highway 95 connecting the Kootenai River Inn & Casino with downtown Bonners Ferry was completed.

Bonners Ferry, which completed a beautification project in the summer of 2004, has been welcoming more Canadians in recent years. Between December 2002 and December 2005, the loonie, a common reference to the Canadian dollar, rose from a near-record low of 63 U.S. cents to a near-record high of 86 cents. With their loonies able to purchase more U.S. goods and services than three years ago, Canadians are finding North Idaho a more attractive place to shop and play.

The CEDU closure's impact on retail spending offset some of the gains from increased tourism and growth in other sectors, resulting in a 1.8 percent increase in taxable sales, from \$65.2 million in 2004 to \$66.3 million in 2005.

North Idaho College plans to open a satellite campus in Bonners Ferry this September with help from the Boundary Economic Development Council, Idaho Commerce & Labor, Panhandle Area Council, the Kootenai Tribe and Boundary County. The availability of college courses is increasingly important for economic development. College courses can develop the skills needed by local businesses, train local people for businesses moving into the area, give new skills to workers dislocated from their traditional industries and improve entrepreneurial skills.

Construction is playing a major role in Boundary County's economy. Between 2002 and 2005, construction employment grew nearly 70 percent, and it accounted for 90 percent of the 120 total nonfarm payroll jobs added.

Kootenai County

When the final payroll jobs statistics are completed for 2005, Kootenai County, with a population of 128,000, is likely to be among the five fastest-growing metropolitan statistical areas in the United States, just as it was in 2004. Every major industrial sector has grown in Kootenai County during the last two years. The industries showing standout growth include construction and related industries, tourism, call centers, manufacturing, health care and wholesale trade.

U.S. Bank opened a new call center creating 150 jobs. Center Partners also added hundreds of new call center jobs. Buck Knives opened its 270-employee manufacturing plant in Post Falls and Sysco opened a new distribution center creating 170 new jobs.

After stagnating following the terrorist attacks in 2001, tourism began growing again about two years ago. Hotel-motel receipts rose 8.1 percent in 2005, after rising 9.2 percent in 2004. Further growth is likely in 2006. Silverwood, the Pacific Northwest's largest theme park, will open a new ride this summer, and that usually brings a burst of additional visitors. The Coeur d'Alene Tribe's casino continues to expand. A Holiday Inn Express with an indoor water park opened in Hayden in 2005, and two new hotels are under construction in developments along the Spokane River as it flows through Coeur d'Alene.

Construction continues to play a major role in Kootenai County's economy. Between 2002 and 2005, construction employment grew nearly 60 percent and accounted for 27 percent of the 7,100 total nonfarm payroll jobs added.

Shoshone County

Shoshone County, with a population of 12,800, added more jobs in 2005 than it did in the previous nine years. It added about 300 jobs in 2005, after losing 90 jobs between 1995 and 2004.

Although Shoshone County's neighbor, Kootenai County, has received a lot of attention for its rapid job growth, Shoshone County's job growth in 2005 appears to have been just as fast. Estimates show Shoshone County's nonfarm payroll jobs grew about 7 percent in 2005 matching Kootenai County's rate.

With silver prices rising, mining activity has picked up. Mining companies created about 60 jobs in 2004 and about 90 new jobs in 2005. Hecla's Lucky Friday Mine has been the source of many of those new jobs. Mining jobs have an especially large impact, because they pay about \$49,000 a year on average — more than double the average pay of \$24,000 paid by all other industrial sectors.

Shoshone County manufacturers added about 30 jobs in 2005, while the transportation industry added

Continued on page 24



North Central Idaho News

CLEARWATER, IDAHO, LATAH, LEWIS & NEZ PERCE COUNTIES

ECONOMIC TRENDS

The Lewiston Metropolitan Statistical Area's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate in November decreased to 4.7 percent from October's rate of 4.8 percent as shown in North Central Idaho Table 1. In November 2004 the rate was 5.7 percent. Year-over-year there was a decrease of 470 jobs. The job decrease since last year was mainly due to decreases in manufacturing, services and government. November is traditionally the month that holiday hiring makes a significant impact in employment data, but this year's holiday employment was behind last year.

AREA DEVELOPMENTS

Clearwater County

- This winter's cold weather has been good for fishing on the Clearwater River where some of the best catch rates of the year have been posted. In the winter, fish stop migrating and head for deeper and slower water. The Snake, Salmon and the Clearwater rivers all provide excellent winter fishing. By late December, steelhead are distributed in the Clearwater River from Lewiston upstream to Kooskia, the Snake upstream to Hell's Canyon Dam and throughout the Salmon River. All Idaho steelhead are summer-run fish, which means they leave the ocean in the late summer with most fish arriving in Idaho by early fall. These fish then spend the winter in the Snake, Salmon and Clearwater Rivers and spawn the following spring. Fish managers have broadly grouped Idaho steelhead into "A" and "B" runs. "A" run steelhead originate from the Snake and Salmon Rivers and spend one or two years in the ocean, returning as 5 to 10 pound adults. "B" run fish originate primarily from the Clearwater River and spend two to three years in the ocean, returning as 10 to 20 pound adults.

North Central Idaho Table 1: Lewiston MSA Labor Force & Employment
Nez Perce County, Idaho and Asotin County, Washington

	Nov 2005*	Oct 2005	Nov 2004	% Change From	
				Last Month	Last Year
INDIVIDUALS BY PLACE OF RESIDENCE					
<i>Seasonally Adjusted</i>					
Civilian Labor Force	28,990	29,000	28,820	0.0	0.6
Unemployment	1,360	1,390	1,630	-2.2	-16.6
% of Labor Force Unemployed	4.7	4.8	5.7		
Total Employment	27,630	27,610	27,190	0.1	1.6
<i>Unadjusted</i>					
Civilian Labor Force	28,820	28,720	28,650	0.3	0.6
Unemployment	1,290	1,180	1,540	9.3	-16.2
% of Labor Force Unemployed	4.5	4.1	5.4		
Total Employment	27,530	27,540	27,110	0.0	1.5
JOBS BY PLACE OF WORK					
Nonfarm Payroll Jobs** - NAICS	26,510	26,720	26,980	-0.8	-1.7
<i>Goods-Producing Industries</i>	4,300	4,430	4,530	-2.9	-5.1
Natural Resources & Mining	150	160	200	-6.3	-25.0
Construction	1,310	1,390	1,340	-5.8	-2.2
Manufacturing	2,840	2,880	2,990	-1.4	-5.0
Wood Product Manufacturing	510	520	540	-1.9	-5.6
Food Manufacturing	50	50	70	0.0	-28.6
Paper Manufacturing	1,120	1,130	1,140	-0.9	-1.8
Other Manufacturing	1,160	1,180	1,240	-1.7	-6.5
<i>Service-Providing Industries</i>	22,210	22,290	22,450	-0.4	-1.1
Trade, Transportation & Utilities	5,440	5,410	5,560	0.6	-2.2
Wholesale Trade	590	600	670	-1.7	-11.9
Retail Trade	3,580	3,540	3,590	1.1	-0.3
Utilities	90	90	90	0.0	0.0
Transportation & Warehousing	1,180	1,180	1,210	0.0	-2.5
Information	420	420	380	0.0	10.5
Financial Activities	1,850	1,870	1,810	-1.1	2.2
Professional & Business Services	1,600	1,650	1,610	-3.0	-0.6
Education & Health Services	4,250	4,240	4,370	0.2	-2.7
Leisure & Hospitality	2,420	2,450	2,400	-1.2	0.8
Other Services	1,110	1,110	1,110	0.0	0.0
Government Education	2,520	2,230	2,490	13.0	1.2
Government Administration	1,890	2,180	1,990	-13.3	-5.0
Government Tribes	710	730	730	-2.7	-2.7

*Preliminary Estimate

**Full- or part-time jobs of people who worked for or received wages in the pay period including the 12th of the month

Idaho & Lewis Counties

- St. Mary's Hospital in Cottonwood received a \$289,369 Distance Learning and Telemedicine grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, which will be used to establish a teleradiology network between primary care and physical therapy clinics in Clearwater and Idaho counties. More than 30,000 rural residents will be served with this new technology.

- Snowhaven Ski Area near Grangeville opened its new tubing hill in January to an enthusiastic response. This is the first year the tubing hill has been open. Though it was completed in late 2004, it didn't open last year because of lack of snow. Owned by the city of Grangeville, Snowhaven offers several skiing and snowboarding runs from beginning to advanced.

Latah County

- Bennett Lumber Products, which employs 350 people, was told in December that Watco, the owner of rail lines in north Idaho, was planning a surcharge of \$250 per rail car to make up the difference from a steady loss in customers. The new surcharge became effective Jan. 6. Bennett Lumber already pays \$5,000 to ship a single rail car from north Idaho to the East Coast and has used Watco lines and 270 rail cars to transport about 30 percent of its 150 million board feet of lumber last year. It takes three times as many trailer trucks to transport the same amount of lumber in one rail car. Watco said the surcharge will be used to cover increased maintenance and operation expenses.
- The University of Idaho has agreed to delay a \$7 million loan payment to the university from the University of Idaho Foundation stemming from the failed University Place project in Boise. The foundation and the university are suing the project's legal teams and developer Civic Partners for \$25 million. This third delay follows two others approved by the Idaho Board of Education in October 2003 and December 2004. The foundation missed its most recent deadline of Dec. 31, 2005. The \$7 million loan repayment stems from two notes the university provided to the foundation in 2002 for pre-development costs for University Place. The foundation, acting as the principal developer, could not handle the costs of the proposed \$136 million University Place project when the economy declined and the Idaho State Building Authority didn't provide any financial reimbursements. The university offered loans of \$2 million and \$5 million to keep the project going, but it failed to get appropriate approvals from the Board of Education. The University Place project was an ambitious multi-building satellite campus in Boise. The Idaho Water Center, the only building constructed before the project collapsed, cost \$43 million and left the foundation with about \$26 million of debt.

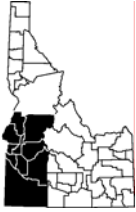
Nez Perce and Asotin Counties

- Excavation has begun to remove sand and silt from the shipping channel of the lower Snake and Clearwater rivers for the first time in seven years. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers awarded a \$5.1 million contract to Manson Construction Company of Seattle to remove about 400,000 cubic yards of material from the bottom of the two rivers. The company also will remove sediment from the berthing areas of the ports

of Lewiston and Clarkston. Each year spring floods carry sediments down river and the sand and silt settle out when the flow of the river slows as it enters the reservoir. The corps is mandated by Congress to maintain a 14-foot shipping channel. But the channel and port berthing areas are as shallow as eight feet in some places, which has caused port officials and barge operators to refrain from filling barges to capacity. Last spring two barges became stuck in the silt, and the shallow shipping channel and port areas have caused problems for some cruise ships that dock at the Port of Clarkston. Some of those ships now dock at the Port of Wilma to avoid the shallow water.

- The difference between an Idaho and a Washington minimum-wage job hit \$2.48 on Jan. 1. Washington's new rate of \$7.63 an hour is the highest in the nation. In 1998, Washington voters approved placing the state's minimum wage on an annual escalator tied to the federal Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers. The minimum wage increased 2.6 percent in 2003-2004 and 3.8 percent in 2005. The minimum wage applies to workers in both agricultural and non-agricultural jobs. Younger workers, 14 and 15 years old, can be paid at 85 percent of the adult wage.
- Wi BioFuels, a subsidiary of Western Industrial, a company that develops real estate and performs industrial construction and maintenance, is planning to build a biodiesel fuel plant at the Port of Wilma on the Snake River near Clarkston, Wash. The plant will create 41 jobs and process up to 15 million gallons of canola oil. The Arizona-based company is making its first foray into biodiesel production with the \$21 to \$40 million plant. Company owner Bruce Nave chose to locate the plant at the Port of Wilma because of family ties in the region and a proposal by Washington Governor Christine Gregoire that would require all diesel fuel sold in Washington to contain a minimum of 2 percent biodiesel. Nave hopes the proposal will jump-start the state's biodiesel industry and provide a stable market. Biodiesel is fuel derived from vegetable oil from crops such as soybeans, canola or mustard seeds. It burns cleaner and with fewer emissions than petroleum-based diesel fuel. Area farmers are optimistic about the potential profit in biodiesel crops. At the 15 cents per pound Nave is offering local farmers for canola seed, farmers estimate they can earn about \$40 more per acre by growing canola rather than wheat. "Anything over 12 cents would allow a profit; it all depends on yield," said Pullman farmer Terry Morgan. The only drawback to canola production is that it is a little tougher to grow than wheat, Morgan said. Because canola is a smaller seed than wheat it is not planted as deeply so different equipment must be used. Construction of the biodiesel plant is scheduled to start in March, and it will be ready for production by September. The plant will crush seed and refine it through a

Continued on page 24



Southwestern Idaho News

ADA, ADAMS, BOISE, CANYON, ELMORE, GEM, OWYHEE, PAYETTE, VALLEY & WASHINGTON COUNTIES

ECONOMIC TRENDS

The November 2005 seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for the Boise-Nampa Metropolitan Statistical Area was 3.3 percent. This is a one-tenth of a percent increase from October's rate of 3.2 percent. Despite the modest increase, November's rate was eight-tenths of a percent lower than November of 2004. Total employment declined by 800 people, but there were still 14,000 more people working in November 2005 than in November 2004 for an increase of 5.4 percent.

The number of total nonfarm payroll jobs in the Boise MSA increased by 400 during November to 256,600, two-tenths of a percent increase from October and a 4.3 percent increase from November 2004. Over the year, 10,500 new jobs were added in the five county MSA — 19 percent were in construction. Although construction employment is down slightly month-over-month this is expected during the late fall and winter months. Manufacturing did not fare as well as construction. It lost 800 jobs year-over-year mostly in nondurable goods manufacturing and more specifically in food manufacturing. Service producing industries continued to perform well, led by retail trade in November as holiday hiring picked up add-

Southwestern Idaho Table 2: November 2005 Seasonally Adjusted Labor Force Figures for Southwestern Idaho Counties

	Civilian Labor Force	Number Unemployed	Percent Unemployed	Number Employed
Ada	187,946	5,607	3.0	182,339
Adams	1,832	152	8.3	1,680
Boise	4,174	167	4.0	4,007
Canyon	77,174	3,051	4.0	74,123
Elmore	10,655	493	4.6	10,162
Gem	7,427	340	4.6	7,087
Owyhee	5,393	121	2.3	5,272
Payette	10,258	705	6.9	9,554
Valley	4,412	202	4.6	4,210
Washington	5,004	227	4.5	4,776
Statewide	737,917	26,959	3.7	710,958

Southwestern Idaho Table 1: Boise City-Nampa MSA Labor Force & Employment (Ada, Canyon, Boise, Gem and Owyhee counties)

	Nov 2005*	Oct 2005	Nov 2004	% Change Last Month	% Change Last Year
INDIVIDUALS BY PLACE OF RESIDENCE					
Seasonally Adjusted					
Civilian Labor Force	282,100	282,700	269,800	-0.2	4.6
Unemployment	9,300	9,100	11,000	2.2	-15.5
% of Labor Force Unemployed	3.3	3.2	4.1		
Total Employment	272,800	273,600	258,800	-0.3	5.4
Unadjusted					
Civilian Labor Force	281,600	281,200	269,600	0.1	4.5
Unemployment	8,800	8,100	10,400	8.6	-15.4
% of Labor Force Unemployed	3.1	2.9	3.8		
Total Employment	272,800	273,100	259,200	-0.1	5.2
JOBS BY PLACE OF WORK					
Nonfarm Payroll Jobs**	256,600	256,200	246,100	0.2	4.3
GOODS-PRODUCING INDUSTRIES	49,100	49,500	47,900	-0.8	2.5
Natural Resources & Construction	20,100	20,300	18,100	-1.0	11.0
Manufacturing	29,000	29,200	29,800	-0.7	-2.7
Durable Goods	23,000	23,000	23,100	0.0	-0.4
Wood Product Manufacturing	1,800	1,800	2,100	0.0	-14.3
Fabricated Metal Products Mfg.	1,400	1,400	1,400	0.0	0.0
Machinery Manufacturing	1,200	1,200	1,200	0.0	0.0
Computer & Electronic Manufacturing	14,000	14,000	14,300	0.0	-2.1
Transportation Equipment Mfg.	1,900	2,000	1,900	-5.0	0.0
Other Durable Goods	2,700	2,600	2,200	3.8	22.7
Nondurable Goods	6,000	6,200	6,700	-3.2	-10.4
Food Manufacturing	4,300	4,300	4,900	0.0	-12.2
Printing & Related Support Activities	700	700	700	0.0	0.0
Other Nondurable Goods	1,000	1,200	1,100	-16.7	-9.1
SERVICE-PRODUCING INDUSTRIES	207,500	206,700	198,200	0.4	4.7
Trade, Transportation, & Utilities	48,900	48,200	48,200	1.5	1.5
Trade	42,000	41,200	41,300	1.9	1.7
Wholesale Trade	10,900	11,100	11,000	-1.8	-0.9
Wholesalers, Durable Goods	6,900	6,900	6,700	0.0	3.0
Wholesalers, Nondurable Goods	3,300	3,300	3,400	0.0	-2.9
Retail Trade	31,100	30,100	30,300	3.3	2.6
Food & Beverage Stores	4,300	4,300	4,400	0.0	-2.3
General Merchandise Stores	6,900	6,400	6,600	7.8	4.5
All Other Retail Trade	19,900	19,400	19,300	2.6	3.1
Transportation, Warehousing, & Utilities	6,900	7,000	6,900	-1.4	0.0
Utilities	300	300	600	0.0	-50.0
Transportation & Warehousing	6,600	6,700	6,300	-1.5	4.8
Information	4,900	4,800	4,700	2.1	4.3
Telecommunications	2,100	2,000	1,900	5.0	10.5
Financial Activities	13,600	13,700	12,600	-0.7	7.9
Finance & Insurance	10,000	10,000	8,900	0.0	12.4
Real Estate & Rental & Leasing	3,600	3,700	3,700	-2.7	-2.7
Professional & Business Services	37,500	37,700	35,600	-0.5	5.3
Professional, Scientific, & Technical	11,700	11,600	10,600	0.9	10.4
Management of Companies & Ent.	5,500	5,500	5,500	0.0	0.0
Administrative & Support & Waste Mgmt.	20,300	20,600	19,500	-1.5	4.1
Educational & Health Services	31,700	31,500	30,400	0.6	4.3
Educational Services	2,800	2,700	9,200	3.7	-69.6
Health Care & Social Assistance	28,900	28,800	21,200	0.3	36.3
Hospitals	9,400	9,400	2,400	0.0	291.7
Leisure & Hospitality	22,400	22,400	21,200	0.0	5.7
Arts, Entertainment, & Recreation	3,100	3,100	2,400	0.0	29.2
Accommodation & Food Services	19,300	19,300	18,800	0.0	2.7
Accommodation	2,100	2,200	2,200	-4.5	-4.5
Food Services & Drinking Places	17,200	17,100	16,600	0.6	3.6
Other Services	7,200	7,100	5,900	1.4	22.0
Total Government	41,300	41,300	39,600	0.0	4.3
Federal Government	5,700	5,800	5,700	-1.7	0.0
State & Local Government	35,600	35,500	33,900	0.3	5.0
State Government	14,300	14,400	13,500	-0.7	5.9
State Government Education	5,700	5,700	4,900	0.0	16.3
State Government Administration	8,600	8,700	8,600	-1.1	0.0
Local Government	21,300	21,100	20,400	0.9	4.4
Local Government Education	12,500	12,300	12,100	1.6	3.3
Local Government Administration	8,800	8,800	8,300	0.0	6.0

* Preliminary Estimate

**Full- or part-time jobs of people who worked for or received wages in the pay period including the 12th of the month

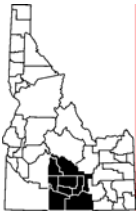
ing 1,000 jobs during the month. Most of these jobs are temporary ending after the Christmas shopping rush. A portion of these jobs are taken as second jobs by people who want to make extra money for Christmas. The November 2005 civilian labor force and total employment figures for all 10 counties in Southwest Idaho are shown in Treasure Valley Table 2 on page 11.

AREA DEVELOPMENTS

Boise MSA

- Cabela's, an outdoor recreation gear retailer, recently announced it is opening a store in Boise on Franklin Road in the former Costco building this summer. The store will occupy approximately 132,000 square feet. Cabela's plans to hire 200 people to work at its Boise store.
- A recent survey of employers conducted by Manpower suggests more hiring is on the way in the first quarter of 2006. Twenty-seven percent of survey respondents indicated they had plans to increase the number of employees hired during the first quarter compared to only three percent who stated that in the 2005 survey. The majority of the hiring is expected to be in construction, trade, education and other services.
- The Ada County Highway District recently released its current list of projects planned for the next five years totaling \$192 million. Some notable items on its list include converting Meridian's Main Street into a one-way street heading north and altering Meridian Road into a one-way street heading south between Cherry Lane and Interstate 84. The highway district has also moved the East Parkcenter Bridge project up to 2008 from 2010 and plans to make Franklin Road an alternative route to the Interstate 84 by expanding it to a five-lane road between Five Mile Road and McDermott.
- According to a federal report, housing prices in Idaho from third quarter 2005 to third quarter 2004 appreciated faster than the national average of 12 percent. On a statewide level, housing prices in Idaho appreciated by 15 percent led by Coeur d'Alene which experienced an increase in prices of 29.9 percent. This earned Coeur d'Alene seventh place on the Top 20 Metropolitan Statistical Areas and Divisions With Highest Rates of House Price Appreciation for the period ending Sept. 30, 2005, compiled by the Office of Federal Housing Enterprise Oversight. Home prices in the Boise/Nampa MSA climbed by 14.3 percent in the third quarter placing the Boise area 74th on the same list up from 117th from the second quarter 2005.
- A six-month development moratorium in Gem County has recently been enacted by the county commissioners, due to the rapid pace of development. All zoning ordinances are going to be updated, the county will conduct studies on both sewer and water issues and transportation plans will be reworked. In addition the county's fee structure will be reviewed and altered if deemed necessary. Gem County joins McCall, New Meadows and Adams County as communities in southwest Idaho that have enacted temporary moratoriums on development.
- Boise-based Farmers and Merchants State Bank is being purchased by Cascade Bancorp of Bend, Ore. The purchase price is \$147.1 million in cash and stock. Farmers and Merchants has 11 branches and over 200 employees. Representatives of Cascade Bancorp have said some changes will be made but staff reductions are not expected.
- MotivePower of Boise recently received another contract for manufacturing new locomotives for New York City. The contract with New York City is for 28 new locomotives and carries an option for 10 more at the end of the contract. In October 2005, MotivePower received a contract from GO Transit of Ontario, Canada, for 27 locomotives and an option for 26 more.
- Amalgamated Sugar is investing \$15 million into its Nampa facility designed to reduce plant emissions and odor around the factory during fall sugar beet processing. The new system will use steam to dry beet pulp instead of using an open furnace. The steam system is only the fourth system of its type installed in the United States and is expected to be up and running by October 2006.
- Boise Airport's passenger traffic increased up by nine percent from October 2004 to October 2005. The number of passengers departing from the airport was up by eight percent and the number of people arriving in Boise increased by 10 percent. In February the airport will add a 28th market with new service to Walla Walla, Wash.
- Micron Technology Inc. recently announced they will be recruiting for 900 new jobs. The entry level jobs will be starting at \$16 per hour with some engineers and more specialized jobs paying over a six figure salary. A Micron spokesperson attributed the recent success of Micron and the addition of these 900 jobs to product diversification into other markets besides Micron's historical staple product, DRAM.
- During the first three quarters of 2005, the Treasure Valley ranked fourth in the nation in the number of home loans granted to investors, the majority of whom are from out of state. Over the first three quarters of the year, investors accounted for approximately 20.5 percent of all home loans — a 9 percent increase from 11.4 percent in 2004 and 8 percent in 2003.
- Home sales in the Treasure Valley are bucking the national trends. Nationally, home sales in November were down by 11.3 percent from the prior month but in Ada County sales were actually up by 4.1 percent and Canyon County sales were up by 2.5 percent. From November 2004 to November 2005, the number of homes sold showed staggering increases of 49 percent in Ada County and 83 percent in Canyon County.

Continued on page 24



South Central Idaho News

BLAINE, CAMAS, CASSIA, GOODING, JEROME, LINCOLN, MINIDOKA & TWIN FALLS COUNTIES

ECONOMIC TRENDS

The seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for the Twin Falls Micropolitan Statistical Area in November 2005 was 3.2 percent. This was one-tenth of a percentage point higher than October 2005 but eight-tenths of a percentage point lower than November 2004. The civilian labor force grew by 4,620 workers year-over-year, an increase of 10.1 percent.

The trend of increasing numbers of construction workers has continued despite some inclement weather. Construction jobs were up 97.8 percent from November 2004, and the variety of jobs — from heavy construction, like the corridor project on Pole Line Road in Twin Falls, to residential construction — has been remarkable. Most home contractors report that they are booked through most of 2006. The city of Twin Falls had 686 new residential housing permits in 2005, shattering previous records, and new housing has picked up in virtually every county in south central Idaho. This bodes well for this sector in 2006.

Holiday hiring in the retail sector was strong with a 14.8 percent increase year-over-year. This indicates that consumer confidence is high and the outlook optimistic. The winter season has been excellent for ski resorts due to higher-than-normal snowpacks. This has increased tourism bookings throughout south central Idaho and especially in Sun Valley. Tourism levels are back to levels reported before the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks, and vacancy rates in most hotels and motels have gone down.

The outlook for agriculturally-related sectors is improving with a higher-than-normal snowpack. Most parts of south central Idaho are reporting well above normal moisture, and reservoirs should be close to filled. In fact, some hydrologists have reported an improvement in groundwater and aquifer levels. Currently, commodities prices are fore-

South Central Idaho Table 1: Twin Falls MicSA Labor Force & Employment—Twin Falls and Jerome counties

	Nov 2005*	Oct 2005	Nov 2004	% Change From	
				Last Month	Last Year
INDIVIDUALS BY PLACE OF RESIDENCE					
Seasonally Adjusted					
Civilian Labor Force	50,580	49,600	45,960	2.0	10.1
Unemployment	1,610	1,540	1,820	4.5	-11.5
% of Labor Force Unemployed	3.2	3.1	4.0		
Total Employment	48,970	48,060	44,140	1.9	10.9
Unadjusted					
Civilian Labor Force	50,720	50,080	46,130	1.3	10.0
Unemployment	1,520	1,280	1,770	18.8	-14.1
% of Labor Force Unemployed	3.0	2.6	3.8		
Total Employment	49,200	48,800	44,360	0.8	10.9
JOBS BY PLACE OF WORK					
Nonfarm Payroll Jobs**	42,040	41,790	36,940	0.6	13.8
Goods-Providing Industries	9,020	9,040	6,040	-0.2	49.3
Natural Resources & Mining	30	30	30	0.0	0.0
Construction	3,540	3,670	1,790	-3.5	97.8
Manufacturing	5,450	5,340	4,220	2.1	29.1
Food Manufacturing	3,710	3,600	2,520	3.1	47.2
Other Manufacturing	1,740	1,740	1,700	0.0	2.4
Service-Providing Industries	33,020	32,750	30,900	0.8	6.9
Trade, Transportation & Utilities	10,270	10,040	9,110	2.3	12.7
Wholesale Trade	1,600	1,600	1,600	0.0	0.0
Retail Trade	6,220	6,000	5,420	3.7	14.8
Utilities	190	180	160	5.6	18.8
Transportation & Warehousing	2,260	2,260	1,930	0.0	17.1
Information	640	640	600	0.0	6.7
Financial Activities	1,840	1,820	1,700	1.1	8.2
Professional & Business Services	5,320	5,320	5,410	0.0	-1.7
Educational & Health Services	3,120	3,110	2,900	0.3	7.6
Leisure & Hospitality	3,170	3,150	2,800	0.6	13.2
Other Services	1,390	1,330	1,310	4.5	6.1
Government Education	3,500	3,490	3,330	0.3	5.1
Government Administration	3,770	3,770	3,740	0.0	0.8

*Preliminary Estimate

**Full- or part-time jobs of people who worked for or received wages in the pay period including the 12th of the month

casted to be average or above average, especially in beef, hog and poultry prices. Grain markets had been lagging but seem to be rebounding. Milk prices are good although they are not at record highs. Dairy hiring continues to be good as dairies are still building in the region and others are expanding. Milk and cheese processors have been hiring workers at a strong pace as well. There are now about 50 workers at the new Gossner Cheese facility in the Mini-Cassia Industrial Park in Heyburn.

Moisture received in the Magic Valley has saturated much of the ground so there should be good grazing in 2006 for range animals. So far 61 farm employers have requested 181 workers for 2006 under the H-2A program (the federal Migrant and Seasonal Agricultural Worker Protection Act) and it is expected that farm hiring will be average or slightly above average. Also, if the trend toward higher-than-normal snowpack continues and reservoirs fill close to capacity, some farmers will then opt for longer

growing season crops such as potatoes and sugar beets. This has the effect of lengthening the employment period for migrant seasonal farm workers, providing workers with a few more weeks of wage dollars, thus boosting the local economy.

AREA DEVELOPMENTS

Twin Falls County

- Everton Mattress and Furniture Gallery recently opened its second Twin Falls store. The new store, located on Pole Line Road, is a new concept and will serve as a model for expanding and remodeling the company's other nine stores. The store will place more emphasis on furniture — living and family room — along with mattresses. A section of the new store will offer ideas of how a living or family room might be set up to accommodate large entertainment centers including 60-inch plasma televisions. Plans are to add to the store's current staff of six full-time employees. The company currently employs more than 100 workers at its 10 stores. Due to the growth, Everton moved its factory and headquarters to Filer last year.
- Another new furniture-related store opened at 1763 Fillmore St. Central Rent-to-Own opened with five employees in December. This was the company's fourth store and the first in south central Idaho. Central Rent-to-Own started in Ontario, Ore., in 1977 as a television repair shop. Now its merchandise includes furniture, electronics and appliances. Central Rent-to-Own provides the customer with the opportunity to rent merchandise or purchase it over a series of payments.
- Twin Falls has its own Toro Viejo restaurant as of January. Located at 164 Main Ave. N., it is the sixth Toro Viejo in the state. The Briseno family opened the first Toro Viejo in Coeur d'Alene in 1992. Jose Guzman, who worked for the Briseno family for 11 years, opened the newest restaurant in Twin Falls. Other Idaho locations include Coeur d'Alene, Hayden Lake, Rathdrum and two in Post Falls.

Blaine, Camas, Gooding, Jerome and Lincoln counties

- Carey has a new spa with the opening of Serenity Salon and Spa Wellness. Owner Tara Hansen located the new spa on Main Street to allow for easy access and ample parking. The spa features complete herbal detoxification, which includes oral supplements, nutrition classes, body wraps, hormone replacements and non-surgical face lifts. She will also add more hair care professionals and possibly a massage therapist. To add to the ambiance, there are waterfalls, hot beverages and a comfortable waiting area.
- Summit National Bank opened in Carey on Main Street. The full-service bank offers agriculture, commercial, consumer and real estate loans along with Visa card services, Internet banking and safety de-

posit boxes. Summit National Bank was founded in 1984 as Hulett National Bank by a group of citizens in Hulett, Wyo., who wanted to keep money in the community. The name was changed in 2005 to Summit National Bank. The Carey Branch is the fifth for the bank and the second in Idaho. The other Idaho branch is located in Mackay. Other branches are located in Hulett, Ten Sleep and Baggs, Wyo.

- Gina's Bistro and Gifts opened this winter at 1032 So. Lincoln in Jerome. The bistro serves sandwiches, soups, salads, baked goods, coffee and espresso. The new owners, Regina and Arthur Christensen and Lois Martin, invite customers to help expand the menu by sharing their favorite recipes. If the recipe is a winner and is used at the restaurant, the contributor's name may be added to the menu. The bistro will also sell kitchen-related gift items.
- In an effort to introduce some Hispanic ingredients to the population of Jerome, Lorena Cortez has opened two new businesses at 501 So. Lincoln — El Tarasc Carniceria y Taqueria, a meat market, and La Panaderia, a restaurant. Lorena plans to offer home-like meals in her restaurant for the Hispanic community that wouldn't normally be found in Jerome. At the meat market, not only will traditional American cuts of meat be available but so will custom meats from Mexico along with fruits and vegetables rarely found in the area.

Cassia and Minidoka counties

- The four goals set by the management company of the Burley-Heyburn Industrial Park for 2005 were met and in most cases surpassed. The first goal, reaching a leasing revenue of \$100,000, was exceeded with an actual \$250,000 revenue. As a part of the revenue sharing plan, the city will receive a check for \$25,000. The second goal was to fill 100,000-square feet of space at the park. Currently, the industrial park has leased 277,000-square feet —177,000-square feet more than projected. The third goal was to have 25 acres leased. Currently, there are 28.5 acres leased. The fourth goal was to have 50 employees. The employees at Gossner Food's packaging plant, R&R Welding and the park manager brought the total number to 51. The goals for 2006 are aggressive but attainable if history is any indication. The industrial park hopes to have 75 employees on board, 47 acres leased, at least 340,000-square feet of facility space leased, a major tenant to take over the J.R. Simplot Co. building and \$300,000 in leasing revenues by the end of 2006.

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Southeastern Idaho News

BANNOCK, BEAR LAKE, BINGHAM, CARIBOU, FRANKLIN, ONEIDA & POWER COUNTIES

ECONOMIC TRENDS

The Pocatello Metropolitan Statistical Area's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate was unchanged in November at 3.5 percent. Mild, dry weather throughout the first half of the month allowed the completion of the beet harvest and continued construction activity, and retailers began hiring for the busy holiday season. Toward the end of the month, severe snowstorms halted construction as well as some holiday traveling but had little effect on jobs. Storms caused delays for Thanksgiving holiday travelers, school closures and downed power lines. Some areas were without power for more than 12 hours. Snowfall totaled between 14 and 18 inches throughout the region and contributed to much-needed snowpack in the mountains and water storage in the reservoirs that should help alleviate drought conditions this summer. Southeastern Idaho Table 2 shows unemployment rates for all Southeastern Idaho Counties in October, November and November 2004. From November 2004 all counties in Southeastern Idaho have experienced plummeting unemployment rates, a sign of economic growth throughout the area. In November 2004 only three of the seven Southeastern Idaho Counties had

Southeastern Idaho Table 2: November 2005 Unemployment Rates for Southeastern Idaho Counties

County	Oct '05	Sep '05	Oct '04
Bannock	3.4%	3.4%	4.3%
Bear Lake	3.1%	3.1%	3.8%
Bingham	3.7%	3.5%	4.4%
Caribou	4.3%	4.6%	5.9%
Franklin	2.9%	2.8%	3.8%
Oneida	2.9%	2.3%	3.2%
Power	4.2%	4.1%	5.8%

Southeastern Idaho Table 1: Pocatello MSA Labor Force & Employment Bannock and Power counties

	Nov 2005*	Oct 2005	Nov 2004	% Change From Last Month	% Change From Last Year
INDIVIDUALS BY PLACE OF RESIDENCE					
Seasonally Adjusted					
Civilian Labor Force	44,680	45,710	43,810	-2.3	2.0
Unemployment	1,570	1,620	1,930	-3.1	-18.7
% of Labor Force Unemployed	3.5	3.5	4.4		
Total Employment	43,110	44,090	41,880	-2.2	2.9
Unadjusted					
Civilian Labor Force	45,040	45,120	44,160	-0.2	2.0
Unemployment	1,370	1,340	1,860	2.2	-26.3
% of Labor Force Unemployed	3.0	3.0	4.2		
Total Employment	43,670	43,780	42,300	-0.3	3.2
JOBS BY PLACE OF WORK					
Nonfarm Payroll Jobs** - NAICS	39,810	39,690	38,930	0.3	2.3
Goods-Producing Industries	5,650	5,670	5,720	-0.4	-1.2
Natural Resources & Mining	20	20	20	0.0	0.0
Construction	2,320	2,330	2,330	-0.4	-0.4
Manufacturing	3,310	3,320	3,370	-0.3	-1.8
Food Manufacturing	960	980	930	-2.0	3.2
Fabricated Metal Product Manufacturing	150	150	170	0.0	-11.8
Machinery Manufacturing	80	80	90	0.0	-11.1
Other Manufacturing	2,110	2,110	2,180	0.0	-3.2
Service-Providing Industries	34,160	34,040	33,210	0.4	2.9
Trade, Transportation & Utilities	7,640	7,480	7,440	2.1	2.7
Wholesale Trade	1,290	1,290	1,280	0.0	0.8
Retail Trade	4,940	4,780	4,640	3.3	6.5
Utilities	40	40	50	0.0	-20.0
Transportation & Warehousing	1,370	1,370	1,470	0.0	-6.8
Information	730	720	710	1.4	2.8
Financial Activities	2,120	2,100	2,100	1.0	1.0
Professional & Business Services	5,090	4,930	4,750	3.2	7.2
Educational & Health Services	3,140	3,110	3,040	1.0	3.3
Leisure & Hospitality	3,760	3,760	3,380	0.0	11.2
Other Services	1,260	1,260	1,230	0.0	2.4
Government Education	5,990	5,980	6,150	0.2	-2.6
Government Administration	4,430	4,700	4,410	-5.7	0.5

*Preliminary Estimate

**Full- or part-time jobs of people who worked for or received wages in the pay period including the 12th of the month

unemployment rates below 4 percent. In November 2005 only one county, Caribou, had an unemployment rate above 4 percent, at just 4.3 percent. Most economists believe a 4 percent unemployment rate to be full employment.

The number of nonfarm payroll jobs increased by 120 in November for a total of 39,810. Construction continued a strong showing with 2,320 jobs for a loss of only 10 jobs from October. Retail trade and professional and business services added 160 jobs each in November as businesses prepared for the busy holiday shopping season. Also during

the month, government administration lost 270 jobs because seasonal parks, recreation and forest service jobs ended.

Over the year, the area has gained 880 jobs, even though manufacturing continues to fall behind last year's level. Job losses in manufacturing will continue throughout 2006 as Ballard-Kimberly Clark begins to lay off workers and closes its Pocatello facility. Heinz Frozen Foods will offset some of the Ballard job losses as it takes on a new line at its Pocatello facility and hires approximately 100 more workers throughout 2006. It is difficult to determine the exact number of jobs that will be added in manufacturing as some of those workers are placed by temporary staffing agencies and are counted in the professional and business services sector.

The service-providing industries gained 950 jobs over the year. Leisure and hospitality added 380 jobs as tourists returned to the area after a several-year decline because of Sept. 11 and the national recession. Professional and business services added 340 jobs, mostly in customer support centers and temporary staffing agencies while retail trade added 300 jobs because of new businesses that opened throughout the area. Job losses over the year occurred in transportation and government education. Jobs decreased in specialized trucking and transportation support services. Some of the trucking jobs were likely counted in professional business services as temporary staffing services provided truck drivers for harvest.

AREA ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS

Bannock County

- Construction has begun on a new bathhouse at the Lava Hot Springs pools. The new \$850,000 bathhouse will replace the current facility and includes dressing rooms and a massage therapy studio. Construction should be completed by next June when the old bathhouse will be demolished. Future improvements include a new pool, new covers over the pools and heated sidewalks.
- Construction continues on the Idaho State University Rendezvous Center. The 225,000-square-foot center is five stories high and will house a student union, wireless Internet café, study space, classrooms, meeting rooms and student apartments. The building is designed to link lower campus with upper campus. The project should be completed in 2007.
- Portneuf Valley Family Center recently opened in Pocatello. The business provides day care and after school care for adults and children with emotional and behavioral problems. Three mental health care professionals formed the new company in October

and opened in December. The business also offers parenting classes.

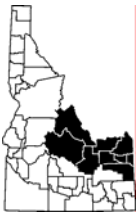
Bear Lake County

- Bear Lake County will soon have a kidney dialysis center. Ted and Liz Schmidt have given the Bear Lake Valley Health Care Foundation a gift to build and operate a kidney dialysis center in association with Bear Lake Memorial Hospital. Plans are underway with an estimated opening in summer 2006. The center will be able to care for six patients and will eliminate the need for patients throughout the valley to travel out of the area for treatment.

Bingham County

- Moose Hotdogs and Fountain opened on West Bridge and North Broadway in Blackfoot. The unique business boasts the biggest variety and highest quality hot dogs in southeastern Idaho. The eatery and fountain offers a large variety of hotdogs, hamburgers and 50's style fountain drinks. They also offer continental breakfast.
- Blackfoot's Urban Forestry Council received a \$15,000 Idaho Department of Lands grant. The grant will be used to purchase 75 trees for Jensen Grove, replacing several diseased trees the city had to remove from there a couple of years ago. The project is the first of three phases. The next two phases will include planting trees along the greenbelt and removing brush and overgrowth on the south end of Jensen Grove. The grove lies east of Interstate 15 at Blackfoot and is a popular water recreation spot in southSeastern Idaho.

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East Central Idaho News

BONNEVILLE, BUTTE, CLARK, CUSTER, FREMONT, JEFFERSON, LEMHI, MADISON & TETON COUNTIES

ECONOMIC TRENDS

The Idaho Falls Metropolitan Statistical Area posted an unemployment rate of 2.9 percent for November as total employment decreased by 180 people over the month and the total number of people unemployed increased by 110. However, compared to the same time last year, almost 3,000 more people were employed in the MSA and 270 fewer people were unemployed. Although the unemployment rate was two-tenths of a percentage point higher than the previous month, it was six-tenths of a percentage point lower than the same time last year as noted in the East Central Idaho Table 1.

Idaho Falls, the largest city in the MSA, increased three-tenths of a percentage point from the previous month, but decreased six-tenths of a percentage point from the same time last year to end with a 3.2 percent unemployment rate. The MSA continues to show continued growth both in residential and commercial components of the economy.

Several variables were factors in the changes that took place over the month and year. Over the month, construction employment declined as colder temperatures settled in and the real estate season slowed. Rains added to the construction slowdown as the ground became too wet for large machinery and trucks. Precipitation averaged higher than normal during November. Retail stores also boosted employment to ready themselves for the holiday season, showing an increase of more than 200 employees. Year-over-year, more significant changes were noted in business support and professional businesses. These businesses alone accounted for almost half of the 2,800 new jobs. Health services increased as the flu and cold season started and doc-

East Central Idaho Table 1: Idaho Falls MSA Labor Force & Employment
Bonneville and Jefferson counties

	Nov 2005*	Oct 2005	Nov 2004	% Change From	
				Last Month	Last Year
INDIVIDUALS BY PLACE OF RESIDENCE					
Seasonally Adjusted					
Civilian Labor Force	59,720	59,790	57,030	-0.1	4.7
Unemployment	1,700	1,590	1,970	6.9	-13.7
% of Labor Force Unemployed	2.9	2.7	3.5		
Total Employment	58,020	58,200	55,070	-0.3	5.4
Unadjusted					
Civilian Labor Force	59,840	60,050	57,210	-0.3	4.6
Unemployment	1,520	1,340	1,750	13.4	-13.1
% of Labor Force Unemployed	2.5	2.2	3.1		
Total Employment	58,330	58,710	55,470	-0.6	5.2
JOBS BY PLACE OF WORK					
Nonfarm Payroll Jobs** - NAICS	52,704	52,910	49,890	-0.4	5.6
Goods-Producing Industries	7,430	7,950	7,050	-6.5	5.4
Natural Resources & Mining	50	50	50	0.0	0.0
Construction	4,140	4,670	3,850	-11.3	7.5
Manufacturing	3,240	3,230	3,150	0.3	2.9
Food Manufacturing	1,090	1,070	1,050	1.9	3.8
Fabricated Metal Product Manufacturing	210	230	220	-8.7	-4.5
Machinery Manufacturing	150	150	160	0.0	-6.3
Other Manufacturing	1,790	1,780	1,720	0.6	4.1
Service-Providing Industries	45,260	44,960	42,840	0.7	5.6
Trade, Transportation & Utilities	12,650	12,340	12,400	2.5	2.0
Wholesale Trade	3,800	3,710	3,860	2.4	-1.6
Retail Trade	7,200	6,980	7,020	3.2	2.6
Utilities	50	50	50	0.6	0.6
Transportation	1,600	1,600	1,470	0.0	8.8
Information	1,080	1,090	1,090	-0.9	-0.9
Financial Activities	2,000	2,000	1,920	0.0	4.2
Professional & Business Services	9,200	9,100	7,940	1.1	15.9
Educational & Health Services	6,630	6,590	6,320	0.6	4.9
Leisure & Hospitality	4,820	4,930	4,430	-2.2	8.8
Other Services	1,810	1,800	1,990	0.6	-9.0
Government Education	3,530	3,480	3,480	1.4	1.4
Government Administration	3,540	3,630	3,270	-2.5	8.3

*Preliminary Estimate

**Full- or part-time jobs of people who worked for or received wages in the pay period including the 12th of the month

tor's offices offering more specialized services were being sought in the area. Tourism related businesses also showed a healthy increase as a result of more marketing touting the area and more activities being offered. Government jobs increased with the need for snow removal and road maintenance and construction jobs increased from continued growth in subdivisions and commercial construction. The only notable decrease year-over-year was in other services .

AREA DEVELOPMENTS

Bonneville County

- Bonneville Joint School District 93 in the Ammon, Iona and Ucon areas finalized school boundary changes to deal with a growing school-age population. At this point, high school students affected by new boundary changes will be grandfathered so they can choose to remain at their current schools, but boundary changes will be enforced in the middle and elementary schools. Two elementary schools are under construction and will open this fall. Rimrock Elementary School is located on East 21st South which runs parallel to Sunnyside Road after it passes Crowley Road. Woodland Hills Elementary School is located on 49th Street, south of Hillcrest High School. Another elementary school is proposed in the center of the district in several more years. Officials hope that the changes in elementary school will ease overcrowding at the middle schools. Elementary schools will now house kindergarten through sixth grade and middle schools will only include seventh and eighth grades. Previously, middle schools included sixth grade. While District 93 is growing, Idaho Falls School District 91 is slowly experiencing a decline in its student population.

Jefferson County

- The Idaho Migrant Council plans to open a low-income clinic this month in Roberts. The council recently opened clinics in Idaho Falls and Blackfoot. All three branches will be funded by a \$1.95 million grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Rexburg also has a branch that is only open one day a week and is operated by a non-profit organization with volunteers, but it will apply for federal grants soon with a goal to make it a full-time branch. The branches are available to anyone struggling with medical bills. Patients pay reduced fees for services calculated on a sliding scale based on income and the family's situation. The clinics' goal is to keep fewer people from showing up at emergency room with illnesses that could have been prevented. Family medicine, mental-health services, vaccines, physicals and women's services, along with preventative medical care, are all offered at the clinics. Two larger hospitals in the area provided letters in support of the council's grant application since it will help to alleviate some of the indigent care that has to be written off. Eastern Idaho Regional Medical Center wrote off \$193 million this past year to charity, indigent, uninsured and under-insured services.

- Anna Inc., an engineering and architectural services company based in Annapolis, Md., won a \$30 million contract with the Idaho National Laboratory's Battelle Energy Alliance. The company has set up an office in Idaho Falls. Anna has more than a decade's worth of experience in the commercial nuclear power industry, and it will service Battelle over the next five years. New jobs will be created when tasks are assigned to the company but the number is unclear at this point. The goal is to use local resources in staffing the office since the area contains a large pool of talent.
- Taylor Crossing on the River is focusing on social needs this year for its Idaho Falls development on the Snake River. Plans call for construction of a reception center by the river and condominiums. McNeil Development, the development partner in Taylor Crossing on the River, announced it will tear down most of the old Army Surplus Store behind Smitty's Restaurant and construct an extended-stay hotel. The development's ninth building is currently under construction, which is about halfway towards the developer's goal. Waterfalls and landscaping, along with the themed buildings continue to draw in new businesses and customers.

Madison County

- The city of Rexburg put up an ice-skating rink at the Municipal Golf Course. Residents can enjoy ice skating lessons and open skating for a low fee. The rink will remain open as long as weather permits. A cross county ski trail is also ready for use for a low fee at the golf course. The city is also planning activities involving Global Positioning Systems and a boot hockey league. The activities are available at a low cost because of a Nordic program that is offered through the Parks and Recreation department. The program is directed by Gabe Cheriton, who implemented it while interning with the city department. Cheriton is now a full-time employee for the department.

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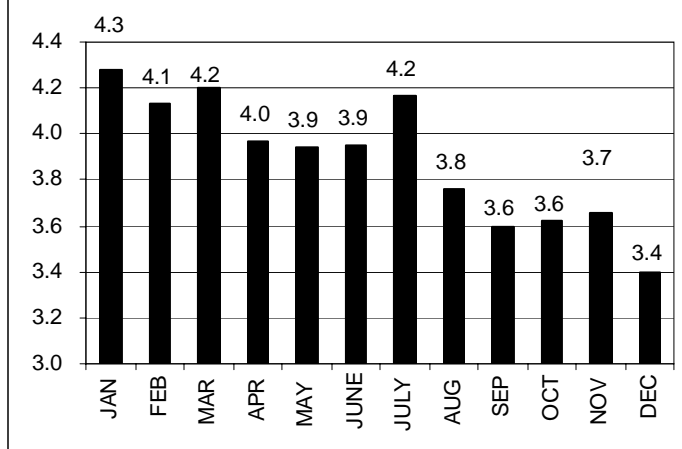
Idaho's Economy Continues Astounding Growth

More than a year ago, Idaho Commerce & Labor analysts were confident the state had laid a solid economic foundation for strong growth during 2005. But none had predicted what has become an historic 12 months – and possibly only the beginning of an historic multi-year period in Idaho's economic history.

After a string of seasonally adjusted monthly unemployment rates below 4 percent, the year ended with another record low rate – a remarkable 3.4 percent. It was a full percentage point below the year-earlier rate and resulted in an annual average rate for 2005 of 3.9 percent – the first time ever Idaho has had a year with unemployment below 4 percent. It was also the first year none of the resource-reliant rural counties posted average annual unemployment rates in double digits.

But not only was the rate low. The actual number of workers without jobs in December fell to 24,700, the smallest number of people out of work since July 1979. What makes this notable is that the labor force has grown from 489,000 in 1979 to over 737,000 by the end of 2005 for a 50 percent increase.

FYI Chart 1: Idaho Monthly Unemployment Rates 2005



At the end of 2005, there were 36,500 more people at work across the state than when 2004 ended.

To underscore how solidly Idaho came through the national recession and the years right after it, the state ranked in the top 10 in creating new nonfarm jobs during 2003 and 2004.

Idaho increased nonfarm jobs by 3.8 percent during those 24 months while the economy nationally gained just 1.4 percent.

But during 2005, nonfarm jobs in Idaho expanded by another 4.5 percent – triple the national rate and again one of the highest growth rates in the country.

Nearly \$124 million in business expansion projects were completed in Idaho last year, and another \$42 million in projects were announced or under way before year's end. Those projects alone added 790 new jobs to the economy in 2005 while more than 300 more jobs will be added this year.

While fueled by the dramatic population growth the state is still experiencing – another 2.4 percent from mid-2004 to mid-2005 – job opportunities have expanded more rapidly than the population would have dictated. In fact, there are areas of the state with shortages in some job skills – welders in northern Idaho and some other locales and machinists in parts of south central Idaho as examples.

Combined with the revisions made last year in the Unemployment Insurance program, improving economic circumstances significantly reduced demand for unemployment benefits. Benefit payments in 2005 were down about 16 percent from 2004 and 41 percent from their peak in 2003. See FYI Chart 3 on page 22 for more details.

And the number of initial claims – those being filed by workers who have just been laid off – was down about 12 percent in 2005 from 2004.

The brightening economic picture is again being driven by construction – up nearly 10 percent, or another 4,000 jobs, in the current fiscal year. But there has been steady growth in most sectors:

- 3.5 percent in wholesale trade
- 3 percent in retail trade
- 4.4 percent in finance
- 7.4 percent in real estate
- 7 percent in education
- 3.7 percent in health care and social services.

Even manufacturing showed growth at nearly 1 percent despite persisting global pressures on that sector.

Economic development incentives have complemented Idaho's fundamental attractions – quality of life, skilled work force and low business costs that draw many new businesses to Idaho and convince existing ones to remain in the state and expand.

The Rural Idaho Initiative has helped spread growth beyond Idaho's urban centers. In the past four years, three dozen grants of up to \$500,000 each have financed infrastructure improvements that have been critical to attracting or retaining 800 jobs in rural Idaho.

Those investments also improve chances for communities to attract more new employers in the future.

The Workforce Development Training Fund, providing up to \$3,000 each to train employees for businesses locating or expanding in rural Idaho, contributed to nearly 900 new jobs at companies in 19 communities.

This expansion has helped offset the drastic impact the national recession had on Idaho's high-tech sector and the high-wage, high-skilled jobs it provides.

Some 15,000 manufacturing jobs disappeared during the downturn — a third of them high-tech. Idaho Commerce & Labor's Research and Analysis Bureau estimates the lost wages during that period at \$5 billion with \$2.2 billion in the high-tech sector alone. In 2001, the private industry average annual wage dropped from the previous year for only the second time in history. The first was in 1938 as Idaho struggled to break free of the depression.

Today, Idaho is essentially back to the pre-recession employment levels in manufacturing, although the occupation mix is different.

High-tech employment appears to have bottomed out in 2003 and is slowly growing again. But it is still thousands of jobs short of the 2001 peak — jobs that average nearly twice Idaho's average wage.

While overall employment in the goods-producing sector is back to pre-recession levels, thousands of new jobs in construction offset declines in food processing,

timber, electronics and other traditional manufacturing industries.

Construction should remain behind the growth on the production side of the economy over the next 18 months although not at the levels of the past several years. While interest rates have been rising, they remain low by historic standards. But as economies in other states improve, the migration into Idaho will slow, easing demand for new homes.

Commercial construction employment should be stable at existing levels. But the decisions made by Gov. Dirk Kempthorne and the Legislature about handling the Supreme Court's decision on school construction could increase employment should they immediately provide state money to help replace deteriorating school buildings. The Supreme Court ordered the state in December to revise its school construction process, which up to now has placed the financial burden solely on local school districts.

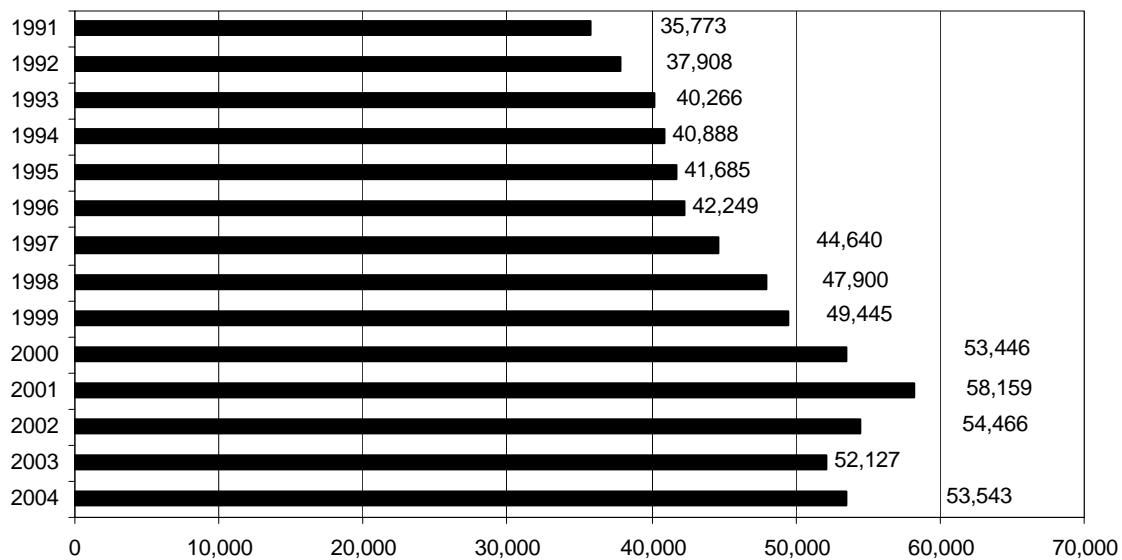
There is also potential for growth beyond 5 percent in heavy construction should any of the GARVEE Bond highway projects get under way over the next 18 months. That bonding plan will use future anticipated federal highway fund payments to the state to finance \$1.6 billion in major road projects now.

Recent business expansion and relocation decisions have also brought hundreds of new jobs into the pipeline — part of the 19,000 jobs the Idaho economy is now projected to create through mid-2007.

The new Marathon Cheese plant in Elmore County promises 250 jobs by next fall.

Cabela's, a national sporting goods retailer, has announced plans for a large store in Boise that will employ 200.

FYI Chart 2: High-Tech Jobs in Idaho, 1991-2004



Home Depot is opening a Sandpoint store with 110 jobs. The Northern Idaho Advanced Care Hospital plans to open its long-term acute care facility later this year with 100 workers.

Premier Technology's expansion in eastern Idaho will create 65 more jobs there.

Idaho Commerce & Labor Director Roger B. Madsen's recent trip to India

has led to a delegation of Indian businessmen coming to Idaho in March, offering another possibility for business investment.

Overall job growth in the past few years has been in the service sector — about 4 percent in the current fiscal year and probably about 3.2 percent in Fiscal Year 2007. Of the 19,000 new jobs forecast through mid-2007, 3,000 will be in health care and social assistance, another 2,000 in administrative services, 2,000 in wholesale and retail trade and 1,000 each in food services and local government. The increase in production-sector jobs will run around 3,800 — and well over half of them in construction. See FYI Chart 4 on page 23.

Tourism has rebounded strongly from the fallout of the 2001 terror attacks and the subsequent national recession. A recent analysis by Global Insights found about 70,000 workers owed their jobs, at least in part, to tourism — one of every 10. Last year, lodging sales exceeded \$300 million for the first time ever in Idaho, increasing over 7 percent to finally match the growth rates the state was experiencing before 2001.

Growth of at least 5.5 percent was expected in 2006.

The wet fall and January have bolstered prospects that there may be at least a break in the drought of the past six years, and that could help maintain some semblance of normalcy in rural Idaho, especially in the south central part of the state where surface and groundwater users have been at odds.

The fallout from the national recession on Idaho's manufacturing sector, however, does raise some concerns about wages.

Commerce & Labor analysts anticipate average annual pay in Idaho will rise 3.1 percent from mid-2006 to mid-2007. But even with Idaho's overall economic growth and job expansion, the state's average annual wage as compared to the national average wage has continued to decrease during this decade. In 2000 before the decline of Idaho's high-tech sector, the average wage was 78.5 percent of the national average. At the end of 2004, it had fallen to 75.9 percent. In dollars, that meant \$9,500 less for the average Idaho wage earner than his national counterpart.

A recent analysis by the Bureau of Labor Statistics also found that 8.6 percent of Idaho's work force held down more than one job in 2004. Only six other states had a higher percentage of multiple jobholders — Wyoming, Utah, Montana, North and South Dakota and Kansas. That same analysis showed the incidence of multiple jobs was on the rise in Idaho — up a half percentage point from 2003. Only six other states posted larger increases. They included Wyoming and South Dakota.

Only Butte County, home to Idaho National Laboratory and its highly educated researchers and scientists, had an average annual wage in excess of the national aver-

age. Ada County, Idaho's most populated, economically diverse and dynamic, ranked second, but it was 9 percent below the national average.

The market place drives wages, and Idaho's ever-tightening labor market appears to be putting upward pressure on wages. In the past year, national and state wage surveys show Idaho wages rising faster than wages nationally. By comparison, Idaho's average wage was up 3 percent to 2.5 percent nationally while the median wage — the level at which 50 percent of the workers are paid more and 50 percent less — rose 3.7 percent compared to a national increase of just 2.4 percent.

In addition, a proposal is being developed for consideration by the Workforce Development Council to impose an hourly wage minimum — probably around \$10 — on jobs being filled by workers trained under the Workforce Development Training Fund. That would still be \$3 below the median wage in Idaho but would elevate the financial quality of jobs for employers receiving this government subsidy.

That proposal would likely also include a requirement that those jobs carry a benefit package that includes health coverage.

In general, a strong, growing economy should go a long way to boosting wages. The record low unemployment rates seem to be forcing wages higher as employers compete for the dwindling supply of skilled workers.

There is also little doubt, under the existing economic outlook, that Idaho's labor pool will remain tight. The state's monthly unemployment rate has been below the national rate since December 2001 and should remain below the national rate for the foreseeable future.

Following the record low 3.9 percent average unemployment rate for 2005, the Idaho Commerce & Labor forecast calls for the rate to drop significantly again in 2006 to 3.4 percent and then stay there through 2007.

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FYI Chart 3: Unemployment Insurance Benefits By County — 2004 and 2005

County	Weeks Compensated			Amount Paid		
	2005	2004	% Chg	2005	2004	% Chg
Ada	101,843	127,060	-19.8%	\$24,618,254	\$29,808,620	-17.4%
Adams	3,115	3,966	-21.5%	\$773,388	\$963,087	-19.7%
Bannock	28,254	37,203	-24.1%	\$6,355,994	\$8,138,431	-21.9%
Bear lake	1,977	2,128	-7.1%	\$446,304	\$466,559	-4.3%
Benewah	6,746	7,715	-12.6%	\$1,667,648	\$1,840,785	-9.4%
Bingham	17,881	20,839	-14.2%	\$3,931,180	\$4,345,342	-9.5%
Blaine	7,846	10,303	-23.8%	\$2,036,452	\$2,654,784	-23.3%
Boise	3,304	3,444	-4.1%	\$800,217	\$792,535	1.0%
Bonner	21,488	24,326	-11.7%	\$4,917,620	\$5,296,225	-7.1%
Bonneville	26,901	29,887	-10.0%	\$6,102,165	\$6,732,191	-9.4%
Boundary	8,977	7,010	28.1%	\$2,066,914	\$1,586,107	30.3%
Butte	789	1,037	-23.9%	\$192,150	\$261,725	-26.6%
Camas	651	580	12.2%	\$165,014	\$135,608	21.7%
Canyon	75,193	99,334	-24.3%	\$15,887,492	\$20,889,309	-23.9%
Caribou	3,507	3,965	-11.6%	\$886,609	\$933,289	-5.0%
Cassia	9,832	13,383	-26.5%	\$1,965,551	\$2,717,205	-27.7%
Clark	332	762	-56.4%	\$72,428	\$152,119	-52.4%
Clearwater	6,988	7,738	-9.7%	\$1,697,392	\$1,849,587	-8.2%
Custer	2,304	2,626	-12.3%	\$518,022	\$570,133	-9.1%
Elmore	8,472	9,437	-10.2%	\$1,731,341	\$1,909,690	-9.3%
Franklin	1,010	1,092	-7.5%	\$207,212	\$240,396	-13.8%
Fremont	5,559	6,219	-10.6%	\$1,245,570	\$1,351,587	-7.8%
Gem	7,086	8,470	-16.3%	\$1,617,072	\$1,886,318	-14.3%
Gooding	4,468	5,802	-23.0%	\$981,792	\$1,278,657	-23.2%
Idaho	9,817	10,467	-6.2%	\$2,246,331	\$2,318,670	-3.1%
Jefferson	6,865	7,799	-12.0%	\$1,650,420	\$1,830,977	-9.9%
Jerome	6,953	8,880	-21.7%	\$1,514,071	\$1,970,549	-23.2%
Kootenai	51,873	66,317	-21.8%	\$11,568,563	\$13,896,870	-16.8%
Latah	8,620	8,862	-2.7%	\$2,090,278	\$2,106,249	-0.8%
Lemhi	5,096	5,581	-8.7%	\$1,107,309	\$1,167,422	-5.1%
Lewis	612	605	1.2%	\$147,033	\$126,925	15.8%
Lincoln	2,367	2,845	-16.8%	\$603,840	\$696,423	-13.3%
Madison	4,413	4,622	-4.5%	\$968,300	\$976,004	-0.8%
Minidoka	13,745	18,977	-27.6%	\$2,612,301	\$3,749,374	-30.3%
Nez Perce	13,935	14,583	-4.4%	\$3,123,279	\$3,160,777	-1.2%
Oneida	438	569	-23.0%	\$97,426	\$112,740	-13.6%
Owyhee	620	818	-24.2%	\$132,983	\$182,841	-27.3%
Payette	9,951	11,478	-13.3%	\$1,937,783	\$2,280,352	-15.0%
Power	4,587	6,274	-26.9%	\$914,688	\$1,202,237	-23.9%
Shoshone	9,494	10,630	-10.7%	\$2,097,839	\$2,218,047	-5.4%
Teton	1,515	1,711	-11.5%	\$362,528	\$422,885	-14.3%
Twin Falls	25,304	32,511	-22.2%	\$5,355,554	\$6,688,319	-19.9%
Valley	5,116	6,875	-25.6%	\$1,243,201	\$1,570,116	-20.8%
Washington	4,524	6,090	-25.7%	\$905,164	\$1,138,435	-20.5%
Unknown counties	204	139	46.8%	\$45,334	\$24,294	86.6%
State Total	540,572	660,959	-18.2%	\$121,608,005	\$144,640,792	-15.9%

Idaho Commerce & Labor

FYI Chart 4: Idaho Employment Projections by Industry, July-June 2004-2005, 2005-2006, 2006-2007

Industry	2004-2005	2005-2006	Percent Growth	2006-2007	Percent Growth
11 - Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	21,140	21,096	-0.21%	21,378	1.34%
21 - Mining	1,966	2,091	6.37%	2,133	2.03%
22 - Utilities	1,903	1,905	0.12%	1,918	0.65%
23 - Construction	42,124	46,222	9.73%	48,993	6.00%
31-32 - Manufacturing	33,654	33,395	-0.77%	33,338	-0.17%
33 - Manufacturing	30,343	31,177	2.75%	31,799	2.00%
42 - Wholesale Trade	26,176	27,100	3.53%	27,666	2.09%
44-45 - Retail Trade	74,979	77,247	3.02%	78,941	2.19%
48-49 - Transportation and Warehousing	17,009	17,351	2.01%	17,643	1.68%
51 - Information	10,638	10,422	-2.03%	10,861	4.21%
52 - Finance and Insurance	18,981	19,807	4.35%	20,558	3.79%
53 - Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	7,729	8,301	7.39%	8,830	6.38%
54 - Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	30,009	31,129	3.73%	31,847	2.31%
55 - Management of Companies and Enterprises	7,503	7,647	1.93%	7,853	2.70%
56 - Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	37,603	39,651	5.45%	40,808	2.92%
61 - Educational Services	4,546	4,879	7.32%	5,139	5.34%
62 - Health Care and Social Assistance	59,081	61,257	3.68%	64,136	4.70%
71 - Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	7,548	7,671	1.63%	7,857	2.43%
72 - Accommodation and Food Services	48,609	49,644	2.13%	50,599	1.92%
81 - Other Services (except Public Administration)	14,770	15,050	1.90%	15,300	1.66%
91 Total Federal Government	13,255	13,066	-1.43%	14,399	10.20%
92 Total State Government	25,325	25,305	-0.08%	25,743	1.73%
93 Total Local Government	70,657	78,598	11.24%	80,945	2.99%
Total	605,546	630,008	4.04%	648,681	2.96%

Source: Idaho Commerce & Labor

Panhandle News — (continued from page 8)

about 70 jobs and Superfund activities added about 40 jobs.

Tourism continues to grow as Silver Mountain Resort and the smaller Lookout Pass Ski Area expand. The Trail of the Coeur d'Alenes is also drawing more visitors.

Despite a very disappointing 2004-2005 ski season, hotel-motel receipts in Shoshone County rose 3.3 percent, from \$2.8 million in 2004 to \$2.9 million in 2005. Between 2003 and 2004, hotel-motel receipts had grown 12.8 percent.

More tourism growth is on the horizon. Eagle Crest, owner of Silver Mountain Resort, opened its Morning Star Lodge in late May. This fall, the resort broke ground on three new residential buildings with 110 condominium/hotel units, more commercial space and an indoor water park near the lodge. Future plans for Silver Mountain include new ski lifts, expanded terrain, home sites and a golf course.

Rising incomes and increased tourism gave a boost to retail sales. Another major contributor to retail sales growth was Dave Smith Motors in Kellogg, the county's largest employer. The dealership employs more than 300 people and sells vehicles across the United States via the Internet. Taxable sales in Shoshone County grew 14.8 percent from \$114.8 million in 2004 to \$131.7 million in 2005.

Construction is playing a major role in Shoshone County's economy. Between 2002 and 2005, construction employment grew about 70 percent and accounted for 23 percent of the 480 total nonfarm payroll jobs added.

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North Central Idaho News — (continued from page 10)

process called transesterification. The refining process separates the canola oil into two products — methyl esters, the chemical name for biodiesel, and glycerin, a by-product that can be sold for use in soaps or other products. Nave said the operation will be a "zero discharge facility," meaning no waste will be pumped into the local ecosystem. Initially he will have to import canola oil from Canada to get the refining operation started, but hopes to buy and crush canola seeds from local farmers in the

spring. Nave's goal is for 50 percent of his canola seed to come from local farmers by 2010.

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Southwestern Idaho News — (continued from page 12)

- The U.S. Small Business Administration recently updated its definition of a small business by raising the size limit from \$6 million to \$6.5 million to allow small businesses with growth matching the inflation rate to still have access to the organization's services. The last size-limit increase was in February 2002.
- Two new hotels are currently under construction in the Treasure Valley. At the Bodo complex in downtown Boise a new Hampton Inn and Suites is under construction. In Nampa a new Holiday Inn Express recently broke ground near the Garrity exit off of Interstate 84. Both hotels will add to the availability of rooms for the valley and are expected to cater to business travelers.

Valley County

- Valley County has hired a consultant previously employed by Blaine County to set up a housing authority for both Valley and Adams Counties. No other localities

are being asked to contribute money for this project but all local governments will have a member present on the board created to operate the housing authority. In addition to Valley and Adams counties, the cities of Cascade, McCall, Donnelly, Council and New Meadows are expected to participate.

Elmore County

- Advance registrations are now being accepted for jobs with Marathon Cheese. The company is not hiring yet but expects to start reviewing job applications beginning this spring.

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Glossary of Labor Market Terms

Agriculture Employment: Persons on agriculture payrolls who work or receive pay for any period during the survey week. This includes owners, operators, unpaid family members who work at least 15 hours a week, and hired laborers.

Average Hourly Earnings/Average Weekly Hours: The average total money earnings earned by production or non-supervisory workers for selected industries. The average number of hours worked by production or non-supervisory workers including overtime, paid vacation, and sick leave. The data is collected for the week including the 12th of the month.

Average Weekly Earnings: Average Hourly Earnings multiplied by Average Weekly Hours.

Civilian Labor Force: A count of non-institutional persons 16 years of age and over residing within a specific geographic area, excluding members of armed forces, who are classified as employed, unemployed and seeking employment, or involved in a labor dispute.

Consumer Price Index (CPI): A national index measuring changes over time in the price of a fixed market basket of goods and services. There are two indexes—the All Urban Consumers (CPI-U) represents the buying habits of about 80 percent of the non-institutional population of the United States, and the Urban Wage & Clerical Workers (CPI-W) represents 40 percent of the population.

Covered Employers: Employers who are subject to state and federal Unemployment Insurance laws.

Durable Goods: Also known as “hard goods” because they include items manufactured or provided by wholesalers with a normal life expectancy of three years or more.

Employed: Individuals, 16 years of age or older, who worked at least 1 hour for pay or profit or worked at least 15 unpaid hours in a family business during the week including the 12th day of the month. Individuals are also counted as employed if they had a job but did not work because they were: ill, on vacation, in a labor dispute, prevented from working because of bad weather, or temporarily absent for similar reasons.

Initial Claim: Any notice of unemployment filed to request (1) a determination of entitlement to and eligibility for compensation or (2) a second or subsequent period of unemployment within a benefit year or period of eligibility.

Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSA): Combinations of counties in which at least half the residents live in an urban center of 50,000 or more and the rest have significant commuting ties to that central county. The Office of Management and Budget designates the MSAs. Idaho has five MSAs: Boise MSA including Ada, Canyon, Boise, Gem and Owyhee counties; Bonneville MSA including Bonneville and Jefferson counties; Pocatello MSA including Bannock and Power counties; Lewiston MSA including Nez Perce County and Asotin County, Wash.; Coeur d’Alene MSA including Kootenai, Boundary, Bonner, Benewah and Shoshone counties.

Micropolitan Statistical Area (MicSA): Combinations of counties in which at least half the residents live in urban

centers totaling at least 10,000—or 5,000 living in a single urban center—and the rest have significant commuting ties to that central county. The Office of Management and Budget designates the MicSAs. Idaho has three MicSAs: Burley MicSA including Cassia and Minidoka counties; Rexburg MicSA including Madison and Fremont counties; Twin Falls MicSA including Twin Falls and Jerome counties.

Nonfarm Wage & Salary Employment: Persons on nonfarm establishment payrolls (including employees on paid sick leave, paid holiday, or paid vacation) who work or receive pay for any part of the week including the 12th of the month. It is a count of jobs by place of work. It does not include self-employed, unpaid volunteer or family workers, domestic workers in households, military personnel and persons who are laid off, on leave without pay, or on strike for the entire reference period.

Nondurable Goods: Also known as “soft goods” because they include items manufactured or provided by wholesalers that generally last for only a short period of time (three years or less).

Seasonally Adjusted: Data is seasonally adjusted to remove the impact of regular events that occur at the same time every year such as the effect of cold weather on outdoor activities, the Christmas holiday, or the summer influx of youth into the labor market.

Small Labor Market Areas (SLMA): Combinations of counties with significant ties through commuting patterns but no urban centers with populations of 10,000 or more. The Office of Management and Budget designates the SLMAs. Idaho has two SLMAs: Hailey SLMA including Blaine and Camas counties; Grangeville SLMA including Lewis and Idaho counties.

Unemployed: Those individuals, 16 years of age or older, who do not have a job but are available for work and actively seeking work during the week including the 12th of the month. The only exceptions to these criteria are individuals who are waiting to be recalled from a layoff and individuals waiting to report to a new job within 30 days—these, too, are considered unemployed.

Unemployment Insurance: Unemployment Insurance is a program for the accumulation of funds paid by employers, to be used for the payment of Unemployment Insurance to workers during periods of unemployment which are beyond their control.

Unemployment Rate: The number of persons unemployed expressed as a percentage of the labor force.

Weekly Benefit Amount: The amount payable to a claimant for a compensable week of total unemployment.

Weeks Claimed: The number of weeks that unemployed workers claimed Unemployment Insurance benefits.

Weeks Compensated: The number of weeks for which compensation was actually paid.